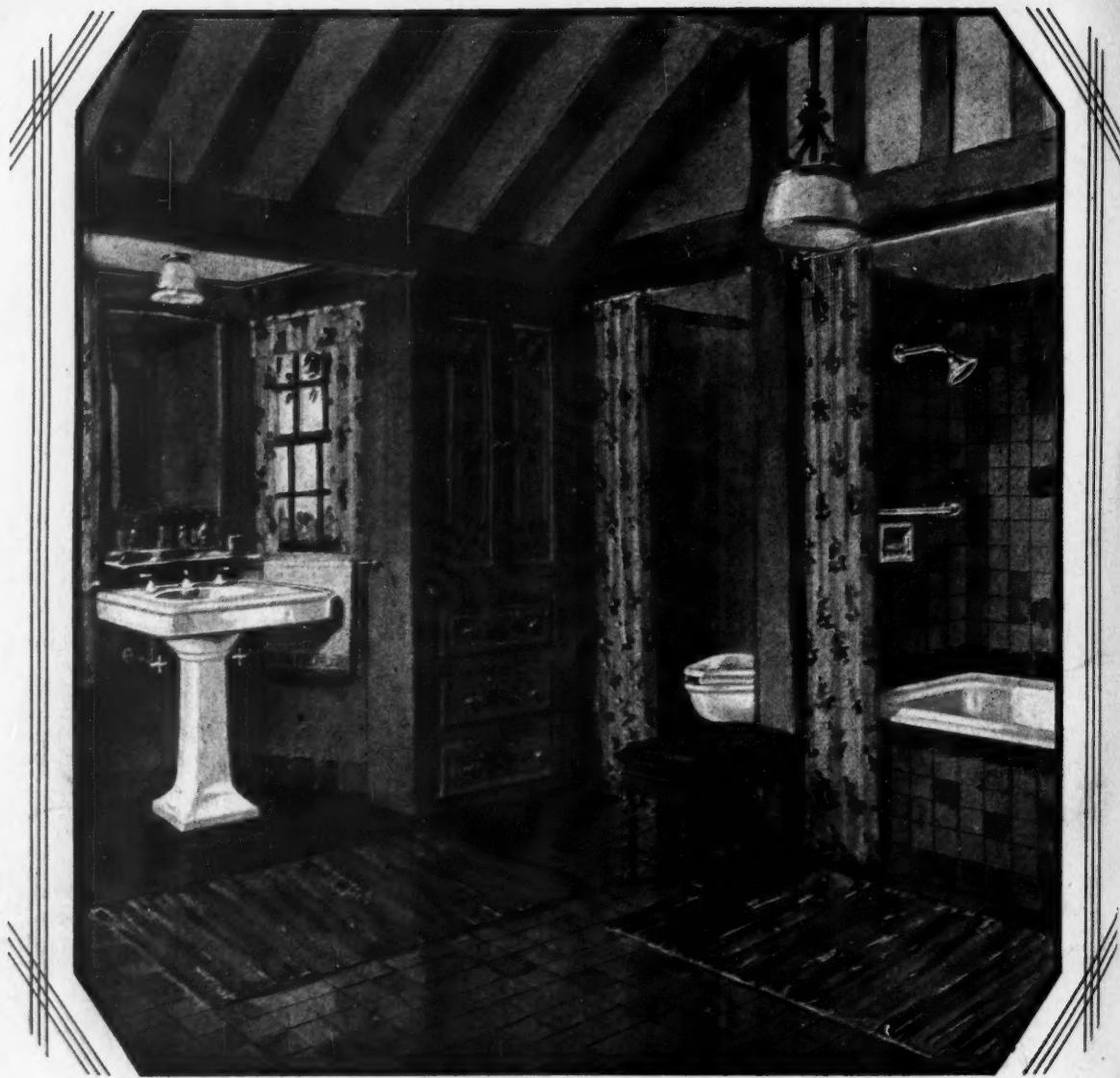


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ALIMONY," a Fearless Novel



UP under the rafters where cobwebs used to embroider grandfather's trunk and the old horsehair sofa, mother's imagination has built this beautiful bathroom. As the children were growing up it was only a dream. Today this extra bath is giving the family the comfort and convenience such a room always adds. Only a

cottage bath, it is modest in cost; but mellow, tranquil, and lovely with its prevailing hue of soft green, its floor of russet cork tile, its varicolored rag rugs, its painted linen closet, and figured curtains of Aqua-Silk. . . . Before building or remodeling write for *New Ideas for Bathrooms*, illustrated in full color. Then consult a responsible plumbing contractor.

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Book-of-the-Month Club NEWS

Published Once A Month By Book-of-the-Month Club, Inc. 218 West 40th Street, New York Copyright, 1928

The Selecting Committee of the Book-of-the-Month Club consists of:

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY, Chairman
HEYWOOD BROUN
DOROTHY CANFIELD
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE



WHAT'S the next "book-of-the-month?" A three-page report about it has just been sent to all our members (these reports always go out a month before the book itself is published) and we can't fairly make an announcement to the public until all our members have the book. This much, however, can be said: It is a very remarkable first novel by a young Englishwoman—"one of the best-written books," says the report, "it has been the privilege of our judges to see in the two years we have been in existence."



Agood many people still seem to think they are compelled, willy-nilly, to accept every "book-of-the-month" that is chosen by our judges. Not a bit. That's why a full report about the "book-of-the-month" is always sent out *a month before it is published*. If you want to stop it from coming to you, you can do so. You may prefer some other forthcoming new book. The last *News* contained, for instance, advance reports about fourteen other important new books. Among them was one particularly excellent first novel by an Irish lass of eighteen; also a striking novel by an American, whom William Dean Howells many years ago considered to be the most promising young writer of the time and whose books have been published privately in France for many years.



We believe that the public, as well as our members, ought to know that the Book-of-the-Month Club is the only organization of its kind, operating on a national scale, which does not compel its members to accept the books its judges select. It is also the only organization of its kind to which all the important publishers regularly submit their new books. Forty-five American publishers, who print probably 99% of the new books published in this country, send their books to our Selecting Committee in advance of publication. These are usually received *from two to three months before publication date*, so that our judges have time to read them and report upon the most significant ones to our members.



There has been a surprising amount of unconsidered thinking about this whole matter of the Book-of-the-Month Club movement. Mention the subject in any gathering and the first thing you will hear is, "I don't want anybody else to choose my reading for me." If you are one of those who feel this way, we suggest that you analyze how it happens that you read the books you now do. Perhaps you are first interested by a clever advertisement. Or you read a review by someone whose taste you respect. Or a well-read acquaintance recommends a book to you. At once, you make an instant reservation, "I mustn't miss *that book!*" Nine times out of ten, of course, you ultimately do miss it. But that's beside the point. The point is that you think your choice is completely free. In reality it is free only in the sense that it comes about by chance. The truth is—is it not?—that you always exercise your choice among recommended books. Now, what would be the difference were you to belong to the Book-of-the-Month Club? You

would be surprised to discover, in that case, that your range of choice among the new books had been vastly widened, instead of being limited; you will choose your books with discrimination, instead of at haphazard.



During the year, our Selecting Committee reports upon from 150 to 200 new books, which it has culled out as being important or interesting. Since you don't have to *take* any book, unless the report about it indicates it would particularly appeal to you—and don't have to *keep* any, if you find that you have been misled by the Committee's combined judgment—what becomes of the argument that "someone else is choosing your reading for you"? It becomes, we believe, annihilated.



We like particularly to contemplate what this movement has done for new authors. Out of twenty-four books so far chosen as the "book-of-the-month" *twelve were by writers who previously were either wholly or comparatively unknown*. Ordinarily, of course, it takes years for a new author to obtain adequate recognition. It is a long, spirit-breaking pull. We don't say that an author is at once "made" when his book is chosen by our Committee as the outstanding work of the month in which it is published. But introducing a meritorious new work to seventy thousand perspicacious readers, (our membership is now at that figure) and perhaps as many more non-subscribers, certainly eases his future considerably.



Do you know that, since January 1, you may belong to the Book-of-the-Month Club and receive the many very clear advantages this service gives, *and yet take as few as four books a year?* You may take as many more as you please, but four is the sum of your obligation. This means *any four books* during the year! Surely, among the 150 or more books that will be reported upon by our judges during the next twelve months, there will be at least four which will be so outstanding that you will not care to miss them.



The most frequent question in our mailbag is, "What does your service cost?" The easy answer is—nothing. You pay only for the books you take, and when you take them. A bill comes with each book you decide to have sent to you; the price is always the publisher's price, plus the few cents postage. The average price of the books chosen thus far has been \$2.40. Incidentally, our members get their books on or about the date of publication, and thus are among the first readers of the significant new literature.



After all this is an advertisement, so perhaps we may perorate in the usual fashion. Why not find out, in detail, how the Book-of-the-Month Club operates? Your request for this information will not obligate you to subscribe. Why not tear out the coupon below now, and mail it before you neglect to do so?

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R A Y L O N G ,
Editor



Bluff Has Lost Its *Wallop*

By O. O. McIntyre

I USED to work for a managing editor who came to his job every morning like a suddenly released trapped lion—with a roar. He was a magnificent desk pounder and kept everybody around him in a perpetual flutter.

It got so when I walked by him it was with a quick backward bend as though expecting a well-placed and no doubt deserved kick. He is responsible for my startled-fawn look.

The last I heard of him he was looking for a job. That is the fate of many other Big Talkers these days. I've been watching them with a secret gloat. They often blustered their way to commanding jobs, but they did not last long. Employees are not awed by noise any more. Many were in the Argonne.

The boss who thunders orders at an underling is likely to receive in reply a quaint travel suggestion not included in Cook's itinerary. The bluff in America has lost its wallop. It has joined the pug-dog.

It is not at all necessary these days to tell anyone how good you are. The chances are they know all about it and repetition indicates a weakness and only brings a stifled yawn. Windy gentlemen have found their métier. They have become radio announcers.

This progressive march from boasting back to silence has been gradual. In all the mad scramble to herald personal triumphs on the first page, here and there would be discovered some illustrious doer who did not care to talk about it at all. Loose lips began to tighten. And along came Coolidge.

America, long accused of being a nation of unrestrained braggarts, has learned to cup its ear. Arthur Brisbane illuminated the idea recently in the line: "Nobody ever listened himself out of a job."

A great executive says the only worthy idea he ever salvaged out of a year of daily conferences came from a man who never offered a word but mailed him a suggestion that saved the organization from bankruptcy.

I can recall how the bright, talkative young man used to be the little ray of sunshine at parties. Now, it seems to me the ladies are more curious about the identity of the quiet young fellow sitting off in a corner twiddling his thumbs.

And as for pitying the poor "wallflower," that, too, has gone out like a puffing sleeve. The girl who can quote a few hot French phrases and discuss the latest phallic book may be amusing

company, but she is not being exactly rushed to the altar.

The quiet little mouse type seems to register in all the hurrah. The best-remembered actress is Maude Adams and the public never heard her speak outside of the theater.

The other morning I read the modest manifesto of a young Broadway egoist, following the successful launching of two plays in a season. He is quite convinced he is the peer of all producers. And that evening the tottering old veteran Ziegfeld knocked the town absolutely cold with Edna Ferber's "Show Boat."

Perhaps the greatest of all lessons in silence was taught us by that curiously gentle and silent lad Charles Lindbergh. Puttering about his single-seated plane awaiting an auspicious moment to hop off for Paris or eternity, his few monosyllabic comments seemed the pale voice of an utterly impossible hope.

I have been casting about in my mind, while writing this, for a brief list of men and women I thoroughly admire. I jotted twelve names on a scratch-pad. In every instance, they are excellent listeners and in no case have I ever heard them speak of their own achievements save in the most casual manner. The swaggerer is never sure of himself—or he wouldn't swagger.

BACK in our town we had a brawny blusterer in charge of one of the river coal floats. One day his son had his ears cuffed by a steamboat mate for being impertinent. The lad went crying up into town and found his father in a saloon. He told his story.

The father, roaring and raging, lurched down the levee announcing to the town what he intended to do to that mate. He found him as big and brawny as himself.

"Are you the fellow," he shouted, "who hit my son?"

"Yes," was the ominously cold reply. "And what have you to say about it?"

"Well," was the suddenly meek rejoinder, "you certainly hit him a whale of a lick."

That is the way of the Big Talker. Puncture his bluff and he wilts in the manner of a slowly deflating balloon—the big wind becomes a gentle zephyr.

I have watched many men, seemingly puffed by a divine afflatus, go suddenly up in the world with the rush of the skyrocket and fall with the same faint plink. You never hear of them again.

And that, perhaps, is just as well.

By CHARLES



Foreign

DANA GIBSON



Entanglements

A Novel by *ALIMORI*

Is It Woman's RIGHT

or

Woman's CURSE?

ONCE upon a time men and women stood before the representatives of God and took their marriage vows. And those vows read, and still read—in one way, or another—“until Death do us part.” And the majority of these men and women took thought, and pondered on their vows. And kept them.

There were some who kept only the letter and not the spirit; and some who shattered both letter and spirit. But marriage was a serious thing in those days to most of the people joined in wedlock, and divorce seemed the final extremity.

Today, following upon easy marriage, we have easy divorce. And also, today, we have a new race of women and men—the alimony-getters, the alimony-hunters, the alimony-payers.

It is a simple—and certainly a true—thing, to say that when love ceases to be a sacrament at the table of marriage, that marriage should be dissolved. Yet, on the other hand, thinking people—among them an ever-increasing number of our Supreme Court Justices—feel that marriage can be too painlessly dissolved and is sometimes entered into by careless and mercenary women with the self-assurance that if they do not like the particular bed they have made they can unmake it again—and get paid for so doing. In this country thousands of women are being supported by men to whom they are no longer wives. They are kept women . . . yet their own mistresses.

In many instances it is just and right that they should be so supported. But in equally as many, particularly where there is no child, where there is no cause for genuine complaint, save boredom or a desire for freedom, these women have, it appears to the thinker, no shadow of claim, moral or financial, upon the men from whom they have separated.

It has even been stated that many women marry merely with



the future alimony in view—and thus take their vows with no slightest intention of even trying to keep them.

It is possible, even probable, that in many cases alimony is a benefit, a legitimate honorarium. But it is also certain that alimony in the abstract is a menace, an ever-growing one,

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FAITH BALDWIN

NY

*Illustrations by
R. F. Schabelitz*



"We can get a divorce." Stephen's voice rose. *"You can't divorce me."*

and creates a situation which should be seriously considered by every adult person.

There are instances when alimony *per se* is a direct incentive to immorality. In these cases the sum is large, and the recipient, softened by luxury, is unwilling to relinquish it in order to remarry. And if she loves a man enough desperately to desire him and not enough to accept less financial comfort than she has been accustomed to, it is on the cards



Eve, who had been Stephen's secretary two years.

that she will have it both ways. She will take her cake and she will eat it, and it will turn to ashes in her mouth.

Alimony . . . what it does, what it does not do, the moral effect upon the women and children it roofs, clothes and feeds, the responsibility or burden it places upon the man who pays it—from these questions arise the balancing of justice and injustice, innocence and guilt, honor and dishonor, upon the scales of reason.

One way in which to study this engrossing problem is to present, microscopically, a cross-section of modern life, of the situation, and move it across the miniature stage of fiction in a serious effort, not to solve it but to understand it, perhaps, a little better.

The Author

IT WAS one of the hottest nights that Stephen Dane could remember. No breath stirred through the open windows and the atmosphere in the room was unbearable, compounded as it was of tobacco smoke, the faintly dusty smell of some expensive perfume, the scent of withering flowers, and damp, tired, human flesh.

The unrefreshed air was tense—fine-strung as a wire. He felt, striding aimlessly about the room, as if he were walking a tight rope, as if he were poised over some immeasurable chasm, hanging, as it were, suspended—staring at eternity—at something which would never end—never end, but go on—forever—hot, breathless, expectant.

He listened for the crash of thunder which would awaken the

room, himself, into life—for the sudden beat of pouring, teeming rain, for the releasing force of nature.

He longed for noise. There was no sound in the room save that of Charlotte's weeping and his own footfalls, light on the thick rug.

Stephen walked to the mantelpiece and took down the tobacco tin which always stood there. He kept his back to Charlotte. But he could not close his ears to the rhythm of her monotonous sobbing. If only, he thought, exasperated almost beyond endurance, if only she wouldn't—snivel!

Well, he couldn't stand there all night, could he, ramming tobacco into a pipe?

Without turning, he could see the length and breadth of the room. He need not even look into the mirror over the mantelshelf. With his eyes closed, he could see it—a pleasant room, well lighted and well furnished.

There was the long couch, the unnecessary Italian table for which she had spent so much money, a table littered with books and magazines and crowded with framed pictures. There were the comfortable scattered chairs, the superfluous footstools over which he always stumbled, the banked ferns on the floor by the long double windows which stood open on a scrap of grass, a square of brick terrace, a stunted cedar or two.

He could smell the river—a hot, dampish smell, sultry and oppressive. Charlotte had a flair for neighborhoods. "The farther East the better," she had said. But you paid a hideous price for two rooms, kitchenette and bath in the "right" quarters.

He tried to put his mind on the office—what Ketcham had said

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Charlotte, who had been Stephen's wife five years.

this morning—the trouble about the delayed consignment to St. Louis—the letters Miss Harkness had said she would stay overtime to finish if he wished. But he had let her go home. Where did she live? he wondered. He had never asked her . . . Curious how little you knew about the people with whom you worked every day—with whom you talked—rubbed shoulders . . .

"Stephen!"

Charlotte had stopped crying. Now she spoke his name. Her voice had that conscious control he knew so well. It was like fraying satin—one felt that only Charlotte herself knew when it would tear, rip straight across with that silken shriek, half hysteria and half morbid music.

He must look at her.

Why? He knew what she looked like—in every mood, in every emotion. Tonight, at this very moment, she would look like a tired child, her blond hair crushed against cheeks wet and flushed from long crying, her eyes, which must ache by now, that hurt, rain-washed blue of bruised delphiniums. She was always pretty—in a temper—in an abandonment to disappointment or grief—in her rare moments of tenderness. Eating, sleeping, waking, talking, laughing, sullen, animated—she was a pretty woman. "Stephen!"

CONFOUND it, she had a lovely voice. If she weren't so bone-lazy she might make something of it. Yet did she not make something of it, turn it to account in every-day living, using it like a flexible instrument to wheedle, coax, pry?

He turned and faced her. The unlighted pipe was set between

his teeth. He thrust out his chin a little. It gave him the look of a belligerent, only partially defeated schoolboy. A woman who loved him would have wanted to go to him swiftly; would have taken his young, lean face, fixed in its expression of mingled weariness and pugnacity, and hidden it against her breast.

"Well, what is it?"

"Oh, don't take that tone. I'm sick and tired of it!"

"What other tone do you expect me to take?" he jerked out idiotically, and began walking up and down again.

His tall, spare figure paced as stiffly as a mechanical doll, slightly stoop-shouldered. He was thinking that the rug he crossed and recrossed, was forced to tread upon, was still unpaid for. The bill for it lay, with a small heap of other bills, upon the floor at Charlotte's feet.

He had thrown them there—half an hour ago.

"I don't care," she answered listlessly. "Oh, do sit down, Stephen—you make me nervous." He dropped into a chair and stared at his wife with hot brown eyes.

"Stephen . . ."

It came to him suddenly that he hated his name—or rather the way in which she said it—drawing it out, lingering over it, as if her voice caressed the syllables, and yet with a hard, repulsed inflection as if her mind rejected the intimacy of it upon her lips.

"I'm tired of quarreling," she said abruptly.

His thoughts got out of hand, commented brutally, with a little hoot of ironic laughter, "The deuce you are! It's the only kick you get out of living with me nowadays!"

But his voice was silent. He was a little appalled at his own

childishness, his intense irritation. Lord, how hot it was! "Tired," Charlotte repeated reflectively. "It's always the same story—this business of quarrel, quarrel, quarrel—over a few petty bills."

Stephen looked toward the envelopes on the floor. Blue, white, buff.

"Petty? They mount up, Charlotte—there's a thousand dollars' worth of pettiness right there."

"I can't dress on imagination," she reminded him, "and if you expect me to entertain decently, this place has to look like something. We needed that rug. The velour chair was impossible—it had to be reupholstered. There's always something. Things wear out, Stephen."

He said, slowly, looking at her across the room: "Yes, I admit that."

Things were worn out. Their marriage was as shabby, as moth-eaten by the years, by intimacy, as the velour chair had been. You can't reupholster marriage, he thought, and laughed aloud.

They had been married for five years. For five years they had been husband and wife. And as he looked at her, despising her, she was as virgin to him, as undesired and undesirable, as any stranger woman he might pass, hurrying, in the street.

He knew her moods. He knew the alert or passive or surrendering contours and movements of her body. He knew her surface thoughts and her shifting emotions. Once he had thought of her as a goddess, stooping to his supplications—a goddess to be adored and placated, to be worshiped with sacrifice and all the ancient, unspeakably lovely, darkly secret rites.

Five years ago!

He looked beyond her—five years beyond. He was back again walking under the elms of the old New England town. The walls, the buildings of the university were all about him. He drew so near the past in one swift, all-encompassing moment that he could smell the spring wind and the silver scent of stars. It had been in May, had it not? Yes, early May . . . and he had gone into the drug store that night, with a half-dozen other men, laughing—and talking. And there he had seen her for the first time, helping out behind the counter. Very blond she was, with the bloom of a ripened peach about her.

He had been twenty-one—and she was three years older.

He was still staring at her. Suddenly, as if his unseeing eyes tormented her beyond endurance, as if they were knives, ripping, her partial control broke. The satin of her voice tore, across and across. She flung out, hysterical, shrilly musical:

"Oh, let's end it!"

"End it?" he parroted stupidly, coming back with a wrench to the lighted room, the river smell, the hot June night, the bills on the floor, and the woman. Back to the woman who was five years and a million miles removed from the laughing girl in a New Haven drug store—the woman who was ruining him with her extravagance, her demands, her hysteria, and her—contempt.

"Divorce. We can get a divorce," she explained flatly.

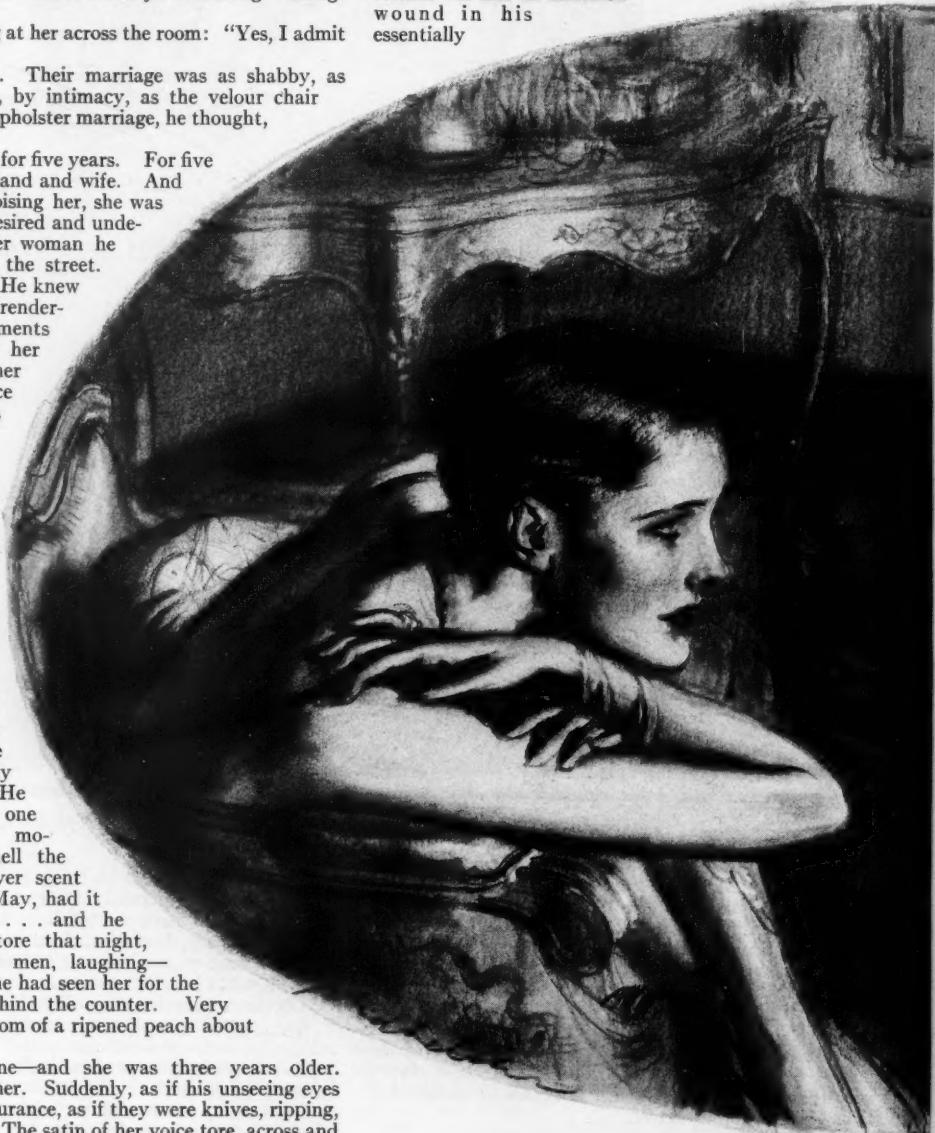
His hand which had lain supine on the arm of his chair, jerked upward stiffly, as if by some astonished, undirected compulsion of the muscles. It was a gesture of rejection and distaste.

"Divorce? Divorce?" His voice rose, emphasizing his utter incredulity. "Are you crazy?"

"No, but I shall be soon if this keeps on. See here, Stephen." She leaned forward; the light was on her hair; her cleverly painted

mouth, a little too small, a little too full, was set in a straight line, and her incredibly lovely voice had turned crisp, matter of fact. "See here—I'm sick of it all. So are you. You don't care for me any more—you've as much as said so. We'd both be better off, free. Oh, for heaven's sake, don't look so pained. People do get divorces, you know, and the skies don't fall! What's the use of dragging on this way together? No one would be hurt by it. We haven't any children—"

He looked at her in futile anger. Children! How plaintively she said it, almost reproachfully. Of course they hadn't any children. She'd been lucky—having refused to bear them. That refusal was like an unhealed wound in his essentially



At eighteen, Eve learned about Harry Stoddard

domestic nature—a wound that had festered all these years.

"You'd be rid of me," she said, faintly vicious, "and I'd no longer be—what did you call me tonight?—a millstone around your neck—a parasite—bloodsucker."

"You can't divorce me," he answered doggedly. "I've been faithful to you."

"I wonder?" she asked softly, in order to irritate him. If only she could get him really angry—crashingly, smashingly angry. His temper was slow to arouse, but terrible when unleashed. "I wonder?" she repeated again. But she did not wonder. She knew.

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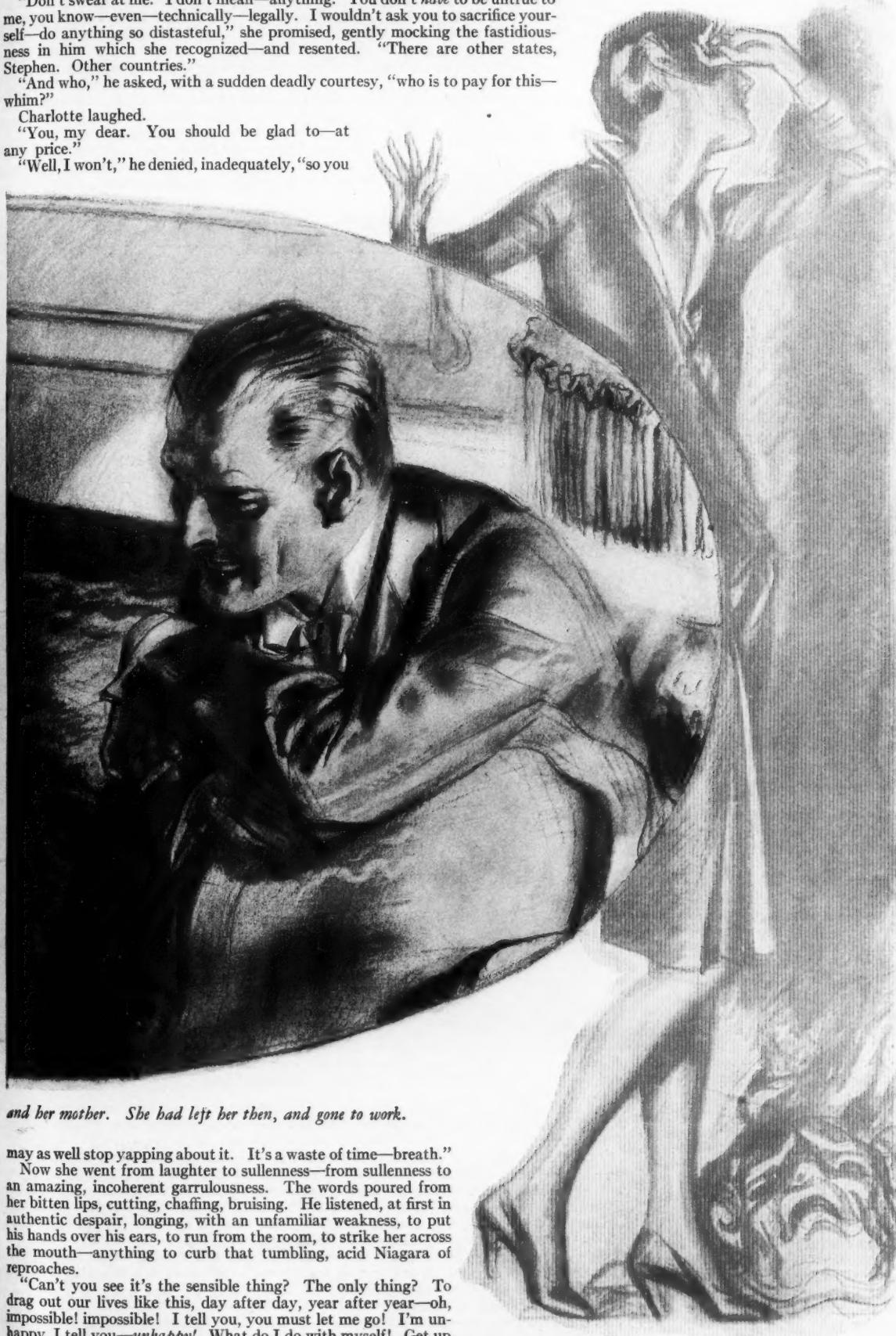
"Don't swear at me. I don't mean—anything. You don't *have* to be untrue to me, you know—even—technically—legally. I wouldn't ask you to sacrifice yourself—do anything so distasteful," she promised, gently mocking the fastidiousness in him which she recognized—and resented. "There are other states, Stephen. Other countries."

"And who," he asked, with a sudden deadly courtesy, "who is to pay for this—whim?"

Charlotte laughed.

"You, my dear. You should be glad to—at any price."

"Well, I won't," he denied, inadequately, "so you



and her mother. She had left her then, and gone to work.

may as well stop yapping about it. It's a waste of time—breath."

Now she went from laughter to sullenness—from sullenness to an amazing, incoherent garrulosity. The words poured from her bitten lips, cutting, chafing, bruising. He listened, at first in authentic despair, longing, with an unfamiliar weakness, to put his hands over his ears, to run from the room, to strike her across the mouth—anything to curb that tumbling, acid Niagara of reproaches.

"Can't you see it's the sensible thing? The only thing? To drag out our lives like this, day after day, year after year—oh, impossible! impossible! I tell you, you must let me go! I'm unhappy, I tell you—*unhappy!* What do I do with myself? Get up

in the morning, muddle through the day somehow, doing stupid things, seeing stupid people. If I do manage to have a good time, for a little while, it's because I'm doing something or being with someone you disapprove of—and I dread to tell you because it only means another argument—when you come home.

"And how do you come home? Tired, bored, grouchy—sitting opposite me at the table, not knowing half the time what you're eating—not caring, unless it's something I happen to like—something different—out of season! Then you notice it enough to kick at it—at the expense—a few extra cents. And after dinner—just watching you read your paper and yawn—fall asleep in your chair—wake up with a headache.

"What do you talk to me about when you do talk? The weather, the newest murder, the office—the office! I hate your



C "Doesn't that secretary stay overtime to work with Stephen?" asked

office! I'm sick to death of it! What do I care about prices and sales and consignments? What do I care about accounts and troubles with salesmen, and what that old fool Ketcham said to you?

"Important—what's so important about it? If you had any ambition, if you had any brains, you'd be in Ketcham's shoes now—not that that would get you very far! But you're content to plod along and take the orders he gives you and the bawlings out and listen to his kicking. Do you remember what you promised me when we were first married? You promised me you'd get ahead, that nothing would stop you—how, if I'd be a little patient at first—*patient!*—you'd give me everything—everything I wanted!"

She stopped, gasping, for sheer lack of breath. He had listened, reluctant, in the beginning. Then he had been too amazed to interrupt her. Now, no longer even faintly angry, he asked her with wonder and a curious gentleness:

"What do you want, Charlotte?"

As if his question released a spring, aroused some motive power, she sprang up and fled across the room. The light caught the cut-steel buckles on her slippers, glanced from the long

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jet earrings which hung almost to her shoulders—the light shone on the soft white throat which her dark dinner dress left uncovered. She stopped, within arm's length of him. Her breast was agitated, her eyes distended, a little insane. One hand, his rings upon it, was flung toward him.

He thought, watching, "What an actress she'd make—what an actress she *is*—how she loves a scene!"

"Want! I want—what you promised—*everything!* Life, color, music, jewels, laughter, clothes, houses, trips abroad, servants." She stopped as if aware of her inadequacy to cage in words the life she panted for, that she capitalized as Life. "You promised," she



Helene. "Yes—what of it?" said Charlotte. "Nothing. Office wives—"

repeated, like a frantic child, "and you failed me—failed me."

"Failed?" He thought of the office, the place she hated. He thought of his drudgery, of her ceaseless, restless extravagance, of the continuous leakage of his hard-won resources. He thought of her open scorn of him. Other men made money, she had often flung at him, other men played the market, took risks, succeeded. Other men . . .

"Failed? I—I've provided for you, Charlotte."

"Oh, provided!" She stood panting, a hand on the back of a chair. "How well? Oh, they raise you—what is it?—three hundred, five hundred a year. You take it and say, thank you so much. They put anyone in ahead of you. When Lewis died, did you get his place? Not you! You'd been his assistant, but Ketcham got the job—Ketcham, who came in the company after you did!"

Useless to explain. Useless. "Other men." Useless to tell her—had he not told her, again and again?—"If you'd helped, if you'd sacrificed and saved, I might have got ahead. Always you've been unwilling to share the burden. You've spent as fast as I could make. Faster. I could have got that San Francisco job—a big chance. But you wouldn't move. Wouldn't leave New York—and your friends. Friends—ye gods! And I didn't dare take the risk of getting out and looking elsewhere. Only men with anchors to windward, with savings back of them, dare to take risks and get away with them."

Useless to say these things. So he said nothing.

Now her voice dropped. Only a rising flush scarred her smooth cheeks like a new burn, betrayed her still mounting excitement. She spoke with controlled savagery.

"I'm through. I'm going to leave you."

He rose and confronted her. He said, staring, haggard: "No!"

She looked at him a moment. Then she turned and walked from the room. He heard their bedroom door close—with a slam.

The storm was gathering outside. He heard the distant drums of the thunder, the first scattering heavy drops of rain. He went to the window, shut it automatically, and stood there looking out. As he did so the sky was ravaged by lightning.

Charlotte was afraid of thunderstorms. He remembered that thunder-storm a scant few weeks after they'd met—the thunder-storm which drove her into his arms. He recalled how he had held her, scarcely daring to breathe for the sweetness of her nearness, the touch of her hot hands, the clinging of her pliant body. He remembered how he had kissed her, how he had whispered mad things, shaken with first passion. He remembered the storm in his own blood, the warning thunder of his heart-beats, the lightning which had ripped the dark veils from his boyhood and which had shown him, clear, white-hot, naked, the face of his danger and his desire.

Danger and desire!

He had whispered, "I love you." He had believed it. And they had married.

After a long interval he left the window and went into the bedroom, walking heavily and carefully like an old man. Charlotte was in her bed, her face turned from him, her body

huddled under the thin covering. One light burned, rosy. He went about the business of undressing with exaggerated care. But he knew she was awake. Looking toward her he could see the dim white gleaming of her tended body under the pastel tints of the sheer nightgown.

Well, the nightgown wasn't paid for. And neither was—Charlotte. She never would be, he thought strangely, wearily. He would never be able to pay for that other summer storm which had driven them, for comforting, into each other's arms.

Yet—had it so driven her? He remembered the things that had been said about Charlotte, in the wise old college town. The gossip when it became known that Stephen Dane was "girling"—seriously. Oh, nothing very definite—just the usual things men say about a pretty girl in a town crowded with youth, transient and forgetful youth. She'd hated her (Continued on page 119)

By KATHERINE M

A Vignette That Will
Tear Your Heart

The Widow

ASUN-CRACKED Bengali plain, streaked with the long bright shadows of early morning. A solitary thatched-roofed hut of smooth gray clay. In its doorway, squatting, a woman swathed in white. Over beyond, half-veiled in floating dust, the gray clay village that makes her world.

Sita, the woman, by count of the calendar, has lived through twenty-seven years. By count of the Brahmanic code, she is the ancient survival of an ancient sin. By count of her mind, she is a child.

Her fleshless cheeks, drawn like a mummy's, expose the contour of her teeth. Her short cropped hair that should be black is coarse and grizzled gray. Each tendon of her little hands stands out alone. Her great dark eyes stare void—eyes of a doomed animal that, having exhausted both pain and fear, knows there is no hope.

As for this hut, her home: one room. Clay floor and walls, cow-dung smeared. No window. A bare corded cot. A water-jar. A food-pot suspended from a peg beside the door. A grinding-stone. And that is all.

Her life belongs to the past. For hours each day through long drab years she has stared back into the past, seeing pictures without purpose. Today, having risen with the dawn, having done her ceremonial bathing, having offered to the gods her ceremonial prayer, she sits in the doorway idle. What more is there to do? And, as ever, the pictures begin to come.

She sees herself a little child, happy in an affluent home, her mother's pet till a baby brother comes to fill all eyes. Then the women of the household take her in hand, teaching her all that a Hindu girl-child needs to know—the iron-bound rules of her caste that control each act of life, to break which is damnation; the prayers and propitiations of the gods lest they, who lie always in wait, find excuse to do one a harm; the duties of the wife to the husband, her personal god; the supplications that that husband be provided duly.

For the rest, to fill her days, there were just small games, and the talk of the women—endlessly revolving all that they knew of life. They spoke of child-bearing, much of pain, and sometimes of disease that could eat their bodies with sores.

Somehow, the horror of flesh so defaced laid hold on the thought of the listening child—became in time the demon that haunted her sleep and awoke her nightly, sick and shivering. Secretly she dwelt on it, till, terror-driven, she framed a prayer all her own, adding to the ritual.

"Great Ones," day by day she repeated, under her breath, "givers of sons and gold and houses and cattle and all good gifts, to me you have given but one thing—this small body, in which I serve. Of your mercy, then, I beseech you, keep this my body clean, uncanckered, undefiled."

Also, of course, she prayed for a husband, laying her little offerings of toys or fruits or flowers before the shrine. And in due season the husband had been procured, from the proper caste circle, not without payment of much money in dowry. In haste, they sent her home to him just before her eleventh birthday, the signs of womanhood having come upon her.

Well she recalled that "home-going." Her little mother and the women of the household had often told her all that it meant, yet somehow her child mind, for all the familiarity of the words, had escaped realization. Such a big man, such an old, fat man, was Bimal her husband! Much bigger, much older than her father; and she at eleven was such a tiny thing!

Four wives had come before her, this new household said. But

all had died barren. Now she, Sita, must surely give the master a son.

"I will pray the gods without ceasing," said little Sita, obedient, trembling. And so she prayed, yet always added her secret prayer: "Uncankered, Great Ones! Undefiled!"

A year passed. Childhood had vanished. Her frame had scarcely increased, all her vitality being daily sapped away.

"You grow thin and ugly and dull," the women mocked her, "and you bear no fruit. Our master will soon discard such a tree and set another in its place."

Yet Fate worked otherwise in the mind of Bimal her husband, who one day said:

"Tomorrow I send you to the temple of Kali, to pray that you give me a son. All day shall you pray, where the priests assign you. At night, you shall sleep where the priests assign you. After that you shall return to me, and in due season bring to birth him, the long-awaited, that shall save my soul from hell."

So the serving folk had taken her to Kali's temple, cooped in the curtained bullock-cart, as became the station of a rich man's wife, that none might see her face. All day in the temple she besought the goddess. And at night, filled with fear, she lay where the priest bade her, in a dark place apart.

"Had you a dream in the night season?" that priest inquired when morning came.

"Not a dream, but a strong Presence that visited me," she had answered. "And the voice of the Presence was like the voice of my lord priest."

"Give thanks to Kali. It was a god," quoth the other. "Return to your husband and bid him send me much money at the birth of the child."

But alas, the child when it came was a girl!

YEARS passed. Despite a second visit to the temple no other child was vouchsafed. And life became one long dull pain—to be borne with meekness, the will of the blessed gods.

"Yet, for all the pain, have they heard my own prayer!" she would whisper. "Yet have they ever protected me from the Horror that Eateth the Flesh. They have kept my body clean!" And the thought stayed her secret soul to patience and peace.

Bimal, meantime, despairing, had adopted a son, that his skull might be cracked on the funeral pyre by a hand within the circle of the law.

As for the little daughter that Kali sent, she had been duly trained, duly married like her mother before her, and duly sent home in her ninth year to her husband's house.

Then Bimal died, because of the sins of Sita his wife. What sins? In vain through succeeding years she had sought to discover them. They belonged to some former incarnation, of which the gods had wiped her memory clean.

But if a man dies, is it not always because of the sins of the wife who survives him? Wherefore she walks justly accused of all orthodox Hindudom, a slave, a rightless thing of evil omen, till death releases the earth of her weight.

Obeying the explicit Hindu code, they had taken away her marriage token, had cut off her long black hair and shaved her head, had stripped her of all her jewels and her clothing, and, clad in a single mantle—a *sari* of white cotton cloth—widows' wear—had turned her into the street to beg. In which they, the blameless heirs, while saving to themselves all Bimal's hoard, did but emphasize the verdict of high Destiny.

But the gods had relented. Sarat, her daughter's husband, a generous man, had lent her this clay hut, apart from the village,

M A Y O

Who Stirred the World with her vivid
picture of the Women God Forgot
in "MOTHER INDIA"

Nicholas Murray



¶Katherine Mayo

to shelter her head. More still, Sarat gave her coppers, now and again, enough to buy her the one scant meal a day that is widows' fare. And, on the days when she walked to the village market to find her food, Sarat even consented that she creep into her daughter's presence, no festival being on foot to be marred by her evil eye, that she might assure herself of her little one's continued well-being.

Otherwise, what may any widow do, but keep all day at her prayers for the soul of her lord? By diligent prayer, fasting and privation, she may perhaps win him a higher place in his next incarnation upon earth. If Sita's life, (Continued on page 216)



The Complete A Love Story



C"What makes you think everyone wants to get married?" asked Tom.

THOM TRAVERS, looking as usual tousle-headed and wistful and vaguely puzzled by life, opened the glass-paneled door of the long office loft and put in his head. The line of desks was deserted, orderly and dark; mahogany gleamed at him, flickers of reflected lights twinkled against the left-hand wall of black window-panes that were streaming with rain. Here and there in the gloom the high polish of a telephone standard caught a chance starlike flash. In the daytime the office was always crowded and buzzing with movement and noise, but now utter quiet reigned over it. Even the cleaning woman with her pails had departed.

Only one human being remained, a little girl, a casual book-keeper or stenographer or clerk, or whatever she was, who was as busy as a nest-building wren, rustling and fussing away absorbently in a litter of papers at one of the flat-topped desks near the door. She was illuminated brilliantly by the only light in the room, a gush of brilliance that fell from a green glass cone directly above her red head. A red-headed stenographer in shabby office black, her face a trifle pale and her hair a trifle disheveled after the burden and the heat of the day.

"Oh!" Tom said, in his simple, pleasant, stupid way, upon seeing her. "Ah. Miss—?"

"Rutledge," she supplied, with a little nervous jump. And she glanced almost apprehensively behind him, as if she thought she might be arraigned for something, her accusers at his heels.

"Miss Rutledge. Did Mrs. Travers come in here?" Tom asked.

"No, Mr. Travers. I saw her go into your office half an hour ago," said the red-headed girl respectfully. She was still breathing a little fast from the surprise of his entrance into the deserted loft. "She asked Miss Smith where you were, and said she had come to take you home. But she didn't come in here."

"She was looking for a quiet place to telephone," Tom said, advancing. "I thought she might have come in here."

"No, sir; she didn't." Little Rutledge jammed papers into her wire waste-basket, shut drawers, ordered things generally while she spoke, and appeared to breathe more easily.

"Nobody else here?"

"They've gone out to dinner. But they'll be back at six," the girl explained. "We're checking the invoices."

"I see," said Tom.

"Could Mrs. Travers have gone into Mr. Houston's office?" Brenda Rutledge suggested timidly.

"No, no—it's not important!" the man said, hastily and indifferently. "I wasn't going home with her anyway; she said she couldn't wait. Are you—were you anything to old—to our Oliver Rutledge?" he asked curiously. "I mean the man who was head of the packing-room for so long."

"Yes, sir," the girl said, a hint of tears in her very blue eyes; "he was my father."

"Oh!" said Tom, sympathetically, apologetically and regrettably, all in one. "Mother?" he asked.

"No, sir."

SHE was quite young, Tom thought, hurriedly deciding in his mind that there must be an older sister or a kind, protective brother, to whom she was devoted. Brother and sister, both making fair salaries—going to free lectures and concerts—

"I'm alone. I board with a lady," she said firmly, shattering his dream.

"You're nineteen?" Tom asked, looking at the flawless creamy skin, of that deep positive type that only goes with red hair, and the innocent curves of the red hair itself, and the thick-lashed, very blue eyes.

"I'm twenty-four," said the red-headed stenographer definitely. "But the girls all think I'm younger because I look younger," she added. And then, very simply, "I haven't had much experience."

Tom was silent, looking at her vaguely for half a minute. Then he said abruptly, "Well. I came out here to give Miss Klein a letter. But I see she's not here. Could you make a few notes and leave them on her desk?"

"I could take it myself," said Brenda Rutledge capably.

"Oh, that would be fine . . . I got my first training under your father!" Tom diverged unexpectedly.

She looked at him levelly, calmly. To her twenty-four years, his forty, and his position as junior partner, and the *mondaine* elegance of the fur-clad Mrs. Travers in quest of whom he had entered the office, removed him infinitely from her world and her interests.

"In the shipping department?" she asked politely.

"In the shipping department. And he was a fine man, too," said Tom.

"My father," she said quietly, assentingly, looking into space.

"Well —" Tom said, and paused. "By the way, you'll be here tomorrow? Because I'd like you to remind me—or get Mr. Stokes to remind me—"

It was a perfunctory question; she answered it unexpectedly.

"No, sir; I won't be here tomorrow," she said.

Tom looked at her surprised and annoyed, wishing in his heart that he hadn't asked her. Now he would have to show interest, and it was already six o'clock.

"Leaving us, eh?"

"Fired," amended Brenda simply.

Tom was, after all, a member of the firm. He had to look grave and concerned. He said, conscious of a little awkwardness, "Well, I'm sorry. That's too bad."

"It's not my fault," Brenda assured him. "Mr. Stokes told us at luncheon yesterday that this department was letting six girls go—we were only supposed to be Christmas help, anyway—and he'd have to take the six who last came in. I've only been here three weeks."

"Oh! Then you didn't come in here right after your father's death?" Tom asked, after consideration.

"No, sir. I lived with my aunt in Albany for four years."

"I see. And did you tell Stokes, when you came here for a job, that your father had been one of our people?" Tom asked.

"No, sir. I wanted to stand on—on my own feet," Brenda answered, with a shamefaced little smile for her own sentiment.

The man mused, faintly frowning, for a full minute. Then suddenly, in a perfectly businesslike way, he dictated his letter, and Brenda scratched away rapidly and capably.

I by Kathleen Norris Letter-Writer

Illustrations by
O. F. Howard

"Shall I put this on your desk tonight, Mr. Tom?" she asked. And suddenly the beautiful color rushed up under the transparent creamy skin. "My father always called you Mr. Tom, on account of Mr. Walter and 'J.G.,'" she stammered.

"That's all right!" Tom said gruffly. "Listen," he added abruptly, "you come into my office tomorrow morning, Miss Rutledge, and meanwhile let me talk to Mr. Walter. There's no earthly reason why we should let you go. We're always a little quiet at this season, but—well, anyway, you report to Mrs. McCann, in the filing-room, on Monday, will you? I'll speak to Mr. Walter about it tonight; I'm going to see him now."

To his surprise the girl's color had faded, and she was looking at him with actual terror in her eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Travers, I do appreciate it!" she said. "But—but—I don't know that I can!"

"You've taken another position?" he asked.

"No, sir." She immediately wished she had lied, had said, "Yes, sir." Anything rather than confess. Anything rather than explain. She stood up, looking down, fumbling the edge of a desk blotter. After all, she had looked for work a long time before finding this marvelous berth at twenty-two-fifty a week—after all, bread and butter were bread and butter—She trembled and lowered her thick lashes.

Tom stood staring at her, puzzled. "How do you mean you can't?" he demanded, his interest thoroughly aroused.

She set her jaw, her eyes were desperate. "I mean—I can't," she said firmly.

"You mean you don't want to?" Tom persisted, concerned and kind.

"No, sir. I need—" She was breaking, her voice thickening, her lashes misted. "I need the money!" she said incoherently. "I love—love this office! Miss—S-S-Smith is like a big sister to me." His sympathetic manner was too much for her loneliness and bewilderment; she sank down in her chair, folded her arms before her on the desk and buried her face in them, weeping.

"Here!" Tom said, alarmed and annoyed. "You can't do that here. For heaven's sake—what's the matter?—don't do that! Don't cry—"

Brenda, in the midst of his protestations, looked up composedly, drying her eyes, pulling herself resolutely together. She spoke thickly but without agitation.

"I hope you'll excuse me, Mr. Travers," she said mildly. "I do beg your pardon. But—but I've done a very foolish thing," Brenda confessed, paling, "and I—I am afraid—it makes my staying here quite"—the red head went up with dignity; there was something very impressive about the colorless young face and the wet lashes—"quite out-of-the-question," she said, regretfully but firmly.

He scented romance, and was disgusted and chilled and disappointed. "I see," he said coldly, turning to depart.

Her eager, anxious, desperate voice arrested him.

"Mr. Travers! It's not what you think," she protested. And then, as he turned back, she disarmed him with a pleading look.



Q. "Everyone wants to live," Brenda answered simply.

"You knew my father, and you're married and everything!" she began, her worried, puzzled look making her suddenly all a little girl again. "Would you—would you tell me if this is awful—if I've done something terrible?"

He sat down reluctantly; looked at her patiently.

Gulping youthfully, she snatched her little hand-bag, and groped hastily among keys and handkerchiefs and coins and powder-boxes within. She snatched forth a folded paper, faintly marked with lines of carbon print, and smoothed it out and looked at Tom over it.

"You're always reading," she began, "about men wanting nice wives, aren't you? About their not *really* liking fast girls, who jazz and pet and drink and everything, aren't you? Men are always saying that there are no nice girls left, aren't they?"

"Have you written an article on that?" Tom asked, at a loss, in the pause.

Her spurt of troubled laughter again. "Oh, no!" she gasped. And then, considering, and flushing like a rose, "Or yes—in a way," she admitted. "Only it's to a person," she explained.

He saw it all now, or thought he did. "A man in this office?"

She bit her lip, nodded, looking at him interrogatively.

"Which one?"

Brenda hesitated. "Bentley. Sidney Bentley."

"Bentley, eh?" He visualized the big young sheik, blundering about with letters and explanations. "I see. He's been making love to you, eh?" Tom mused aloud.

"Oh, no!" she said simply. "That's just it. He—he takes the other girls out—riding, you know, he has a car. And to night clubs and movies and things. He's never paid the faintest attention to *me*."

"But then I don't see exactly—why—" Tom began, feeling his way. There was a pause.

"No, neither did I. That's what I wrote to ask him," Brenda agreed simply.

It didn't sound like her, somehow. The man felt that there must be more to this than met the eye.

"You see, I'm leaving tomorrow," she said, answering his unspoken thoughts. "And I'm moving from my boarding-house the next day—Sunday. I've only been there a few weeks and I'm not going to leave an address. I'll tell my landlady that I'll call for my mail—only there never is any. So that they won't be able to trace me!"

"You mean Bentley won't?"

"No. Not in a city as big as this. I may not even stay in the city," Brenda said.

"Have you any money?" Tom asked abruptly.

"Enough for that."

He sat looking at her, feeling a funny unreality in the peaceful silence between them. He was forty; perhaps this was the modern way. But certainly this pretty, dignified, ladylike girl before him didn't look like a revolutionary. She was nicely made, little Miss Rutledge, nice slim little figure and fine wrist. The cone of light above her head turned every red thread of her hair to blazing metal color.

"What's in the letter?" he asked suddenly.

For answer she read it, clearly, and not too fast.

"My dear Mr. Bentley:

"I am twenty-four years old, healthy, and a graduate of a fine high school. You know what I look like, so I won't go into that. I don't pet, smoke, drink, or go in for any kind of jazzing, motor trips, night clubs, and all the rest of it. I play the piano, love books, speak fair French, and am never so happy as when listening to a fine lecture, taking a long walk, gardening, cooking, or sitting by the fire talking to someone I like. No man has ever kissed me, since my father died, and I don't like sex talk, plays, or books.

"I want to marry a good man, manage my home intelligently on a strict budget system, have children, move into the country, save money, and become a good wife, mother and citizen. At twenty-four, I'm not such a fool as to think that there is only one husband in the world for me—I truly believe you would make one, and two or three other men might, and I could promise on my side entire



Q. "You could tell the minute your eye fell on a girl that you didn't want to marry her, couldn't you?" asked Brenda.
"Or that I did," said Tom fervently.

fidelity, devotion, appreciation of what you would give me. The women of our family have been faithful to some pretty poor specimens, and I believe that I could make any reasonable man idiotically, deliriously, completely happy. I know I could.

"Why is it that during my weeks in this office, when you and I have spoken to each other several times a day, exchanged a few friendly words, you never have seemed to care to go on? You've never asked to call upon me, you've never noticed any of the overtures I've made.

"I'm not criticizing you for preferring the other girls—girls, like some in this office, who seem to be further along in the friendship of men before they meet them than I ever am! I don't want to do the things the others do, drink things that are dangerous, go places, take risks that are dangerous. But I do want friendship, liking, companionship, and all my efforts to gain it seem to end in the same place. Every man in the office says good morning to me, and lets it go at that.

"Are you shy with my type of girl or am I shy? I'll never see you again, so I'll never know. But I want you to remember all your life that there was a girl close beside you for nearly four weeks, trying her best to be friendly, only too eager to go on and perhaps develop the sort of affection that leads to wifely love and lifelong loyalty, and you never gave her the slightest reason to believe that you didn't prefer the jazzing, spending, petting, drinking, smoking kind!"

She finished; her face was scarlet. Folding the paper slowly,



talking, newspapers and books are always talking about the modern girl," Brenda rushed on. "There are lots in this very office who spend all their money on clothes and beauty parlors, who wouldn't have a baby on a bet, who work their men friends for dinners and dances up to the last cent, and who love cocktails and road-houses and shady books and plays!

"These men know that! They can't—in their minds—expect girls like that to change by magic the minute they're married, and settle down to dressing on an allowance, and keeping house, and giving up parties and petting and all the rest of it. But it's those girls," she added bitterly, "it's those girls they

rush, you can bet—

"Well," Brenda interrupted herself in a suddenly modified tone, "it isn't *your* fault! But it did kind of make me mad," she apologized, "and I wrote this letter a few days ago and mailed four of them copies of it!"

"They'll identify you, of course!" Tom said anxiously.

"Oh, I signed them," Brenda told him, superbly.

"Huh?" he commented, in dissatisfaction. And for a few seconds he was silent, and Brenda sat silently watching him, with the green cone sending its stream of bright light upon her amazing hair.

"Suppose one of them cares enough to hunt you down and follow this thing up?" the man presently asked apprehensively. "Well, I thought of that," Brenda answered, nodding slightly. "But in that case I suppose I should just have to—deal with him," she added sensibly.

He betrayed no emotion. "Who were the other men?" he asked.

"Keane Perry, Mr. Thompson, and Jules de la Tour," she responded readily. "Mr. de la Tour is French, so I thought that might appeal to him—my speaking it, I mean."

"And how do you happen to speak French?"

"Mother taught me. She was a teacher. And then I keep it up at night-school," Brenda said.

"But at night-school—French classes—don't you meet men there?" Tom asked.

"Oh, I meet plenty of men!" the girl answered carelessly. "But they just—they just don't seem to—to take," she explained, a little uncertainly.

"You want to get married?" He was too deeply amazed and puzzled to word it more gracefully. The whole thing had taken him completely by surprise; Tom Travers felt as if he had never talked to a real girl before.

"Everyone wants to get married!" Brenda told him indifferently. She was thinking hard. "But if I had known that there was any chance of my staying on here, I never would have written those letters," she said, frowning, speaking in an undertone, as if to herself.

"You feel that you couldn't stay on, now?"

"Oh, no. I couldn't!"

"What makes you think," Tom began again, "that everyone wants to get married?"

"Everyone wants to live," she answered simply.

"And marrying is living, is it?"

"You are married, so perhaps you don't appreciate how wonderful it is," Brenda said. "Having (Continued on page 140)

she raised her eyes to Tom's and drew a long, defiant breath. "My gosh!" Tom muttered, staring. For the simple words, read quite unaffectedly in an unemotional, pleasant voice, had strangely stirred him. "Did you mail it?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, last night."

"He's got it?"

"Probably. I sent it to his house," Brenda said calmly.

Tom stared at her. "He'll misunderstand it," he offered, shaking his head.

"I don't care if he does!" Brenda said recklessly. "I'll never see him again."

THE man was musing, struck with a series of rapidly moving thoughts. "You could telephone his house," he suggested suddenly. "It seems to me I would! It seems to me I wouldn't let him read that letter."

"I couldn't telephone them *all*," Brenda said.

"How do you mean—'them all'?" Tom demanded, aghast.

"I sent it to four of them," the girl confessed, impulsively, after a moment of hesitation.

"As a joke?" His puzzled, almost affronted expression suggested that he did not think it an especially good one.

"No," she said seriously. "As a reminder."

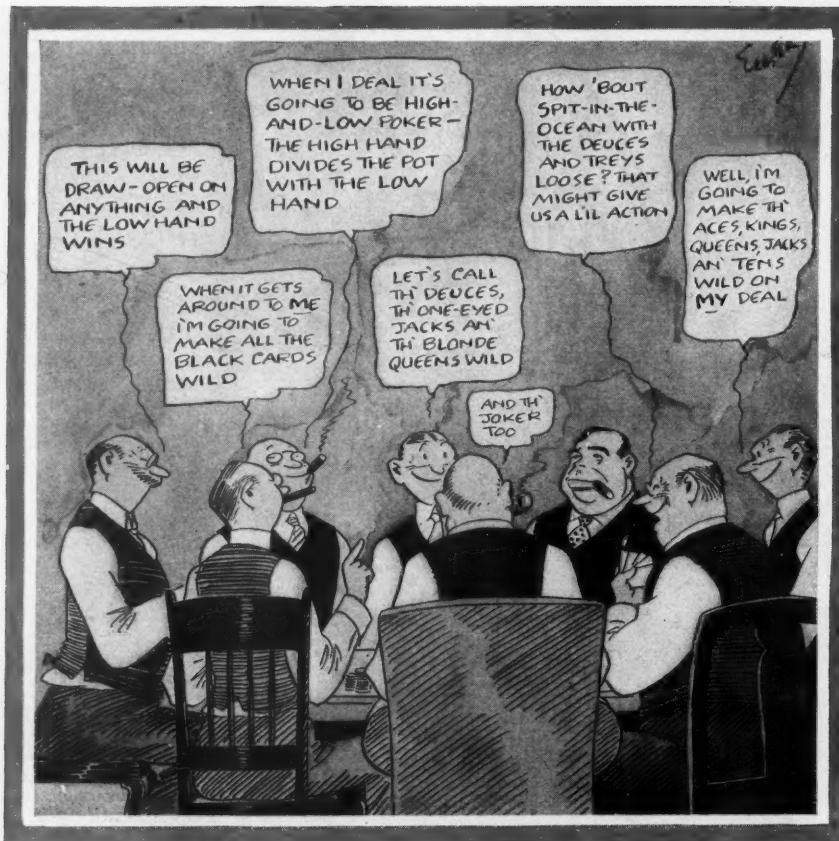
"A reminder? I don't get you."

"A reminder that what they are all saying they want," she persisted unhappily, "they don't want at all!"

"You mean—" He hesitated.

"I mean a straight woman, who loves kids and home and everything!" she supplied crossly, impatiently. "Men are always

By Irvin



I s there a Second to

SOMETIMES I'm afraid I'm getting to be hopelessly old-fashioned. I try to be sympathetic and liberal and all like that toward the new generation. Yet how often, on viewing the new generation, do I find myself asking myself questions: Why does the average débutante have to look and act as though she were out on bail? Why is it that so many of the younger *intelligentsia* seem to have so much trouble deciding which sex they're going to belong to?

Admitting, if you please, that youth must be served, why does such a large percentage of our youth insist on being served raw? Why, among the oncomers, isn't a well-written, decent book given half as much consideration as a badly-written, dirty one? What does this ultra-modernistic art mean, if anything? Or is it meant to mean anything? Why is it a mark of stupidity to be reasonably tolerant, reasonably courteous? Why is it now good-breeding to appear ill-bred?

Why do they call it the Junior League when the pictures of its members as shown to us in the rotogravure section prove that it should be Junior Leg? Not that I have any grudge against the human leg, as such. I heartily indorse it, especially the female human leg, if shapely and not constantly on public exhibition. But I like for a leg to dawn on me gradually, like a sunrise, not to come leaping upon me nudely and, as it were, all at once, like a shucked oyster.

I figure the trouble with me must be that by reason of early environment I failed to develop the proper foundations for the proper view-point, and now, by reason of accumulating years, cannot at this late date hope to develop it; which merely is a rather involved way of admitting that one has fallen miles behind

the times. I read the advice to the well-dressed man in the theater program and am pained to note that, sartorially speaking, there's nothing correct about me except possibly my back collar button, and I wouldn't swear to that.

I read some of the current novels—or try to—and discover that what in my ignorance I've all along been thinking was filth is really beauty. I read the ablest dramatic criticisms and am thereby forced to admit that when I pine for a revival of such plays as "Peter Pan" and "Pomander Walk" and "Shore Acres," I must be suffering from a severe attack of pollen in the pod. It's rapidly making a non-reader out of me. To avoid becoming broody and morbid I have to fall back on the weather reports and the comic strips.

So, beyond question, it becomes apparent that I'm getting hopelessly old-fashioned not only in my personal habits and my personal likings but in my estimates and my outlooks. Very well then, so be it.

But before my sense of judgment begins to ride around in a wheel-chair, before my temperamental arteries have entirely hardened, before I'm assigned to my cell in the harmless ward of the Home for Decayed Intellectuals, I fain would utter one passionate swan-song of protest against the passing of a beloved but now rapidly vanishing institution of our fathers, coupled with a plea for its revival and its restitution, undefiled, incorrupt and uncontaminated, to its rightful enthronement in the affections of all true Americans. Approaching a task, I never felt fainer than I do at this moment.

Friends, I refer to the ancient and honorable game of poker—the noblest game of chance ever devised for the joy of the children

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S. Cobb

*Illustrations by
H. T. Webster*



This Motion?

*A Plea from the Heart
of an Old-Fashioned
Poker Player*

of men. And I don't mean maybe. Nor do I mean dealers' choice, that abomination of the devil, with its deuces wild and its one-eyed jacks and its joker going at large; its "Ma Fergusons" and its "Spit-in-the-Oceans" and its "Barber's Itches"; its so-ons and its so-forths, world without end. I mean poker—just plain honest-to-God poker in one or another of its three correct, standardized and orthodox interpretations, to wit: straight draw, jacks-pots, stud. But the greatest of these is stud.

Lest someone break in on me here to say I'm getting unduly excited over something which isn't worth getting excited over, let me point out certain salient facts in connection with this subject. Poker essentially is a product of the finest mentality of the temperate zone of this hemisphere; geographically, it rates as a typical North American institution.

SO NEARLY as we may trace its origins, it came into existence coincidentally with the expansion of this infant republic. It grew in popularity with the growth of the nation.

Playing it taught our forebears shrewdness, sharpened their perceptions, schooled them in a native diplomacy, gave them spunk for the taking of desperate and forlorn chances, helped to make them good losers in adversity and impulsive winners in success. Our earlier statesmen threw on it; our pioneer leaders honed their brains on its intricacies and its vagaries; our bygone romanticists builded much good copy out of it.

It runs like a golden cord through our political history and it threads sentientially in and out of our backwoods fiction and our frontier poetry. How bare would be the traditions of the Old South and of the Wild West without their fabled poker

backgrounds. Henry Clay was a famous devotee of the sport, Daniel Webster was another, Sam Houston was a third. In a later period Uncle Joe Cannon was noted for the canny logic of his game, although it is safe to assume that he never gave sanction to the aborted and formless variation which bears his name.

There is something about it which is absolutely American, and beyond peradventure it is a man's game just as auction bridge is in essence a woman's game.

Finally, there is this to be said for it, and it is a thing that can be said for no other game with which I am familiar. It is a game that is played with cards but it really is a game in which your ability at reading human nature is the main requisite—the one game where along with your chips you constantly are matching your wits and your will-power and your abilities as an actor against the other fellow's wits and the other fellow's chips; also the only one where, as in stud, you play the opponent's cards, so to speak, as well as your own cards.

At least it was all of these things before impious moderns began to monkey with its hallowed rules and degrade its high intents with those hideous innovations of which I would complain.

You perchance already have guessed that I love real poker? I do. I learned its blessed rudiments in one of its favored shrines (Paducah, Kentucky, papers please copy) and I rounded out my education in the Far South where it was born and in the Far West where it tenderly was nurtured and ripened. In other departments of this life I may have failed and come short, but I am a tolerably good poker player and I admit it. Even so, I cannot demonstrate the gifts that are in me unless it be played according to the old (*Continued on page 220*)

When the Circus Came to

By Wm. J. Locke

A Story from a
Town of ROMANCE
in Old France



TOMBAREL had fitted up a bathroom in his house at Creille, and I was staying with him. You must not imagine that I had declined Tombarel's hospitality heretofore on the mere grounds of his having no bathroom. It was the other way about.

The new possession of it had put the idea of inviting me into his head. For Tombarel had come into money—a couple of hundred thousand francs— inheriting it from an aunt even more venerable than himself, who had lived in the Limousin. He regarded himself as fabulously rich.

"And the first thing I did with my wealth, my dear friend," said he, "was to fulfil the dream of my life and install a *salle de bains* in my house, with a furnace and central heating and all the luxury of a palace-hotel. You must come and see it. I have spared no expense. Angélique is afraid of it. She says it is much too splendid to wash in. She wants to put little images of saints all about it and turn it into a chapel. The poor woman! She has never seen a *salle de bains* before in her life—just think of it!"

I thought of it, as Tombarel in his picturesque way elaborated the theme of turning a completely equipped modern bathroom into a chapel . . . Yes, I must come and see it. There were nickel taps; there was a nickel hot-water rail for towels; there was a marble floor.

Now it happened that at the time of his fervid announcement I was somewhat run down. It was nearing the end of the season.



*Illustrations by
Clara Elsene Peck*

I had painted, for profit, a good many uninteresting people, and I had done little for my own pleasure. Cannes was chock-full of the cosmopolitan horde with whom I had been forced to eat and drink more than was good for a hard-working painter; and the March weather was execrable. I must go away, said I, for a change.

And then came the invitation. What greater change and rest for an overdriven man could there be than the pure mountain air, far away from the superexciting sea and the mephitic atmosphere of casinos and hotel dining-rooms, and the nerve-racking babel of tongues?

The more he talked the more did he grow convinced that Creille was the only place that could restore me to health. And then there was the *salle de bains*. It was written that I should come.

So I went gladly to stay with Tombarel, perfect and courtly host; and from the peace of the mountains, Angélique's simple yet subtly prepared food and Tombarel's talk, to say nothing of the wonderful bathroom (which needed only a chair to sit upon and a bath-mat whereon to set wet feet, to be the most splendid bathroom on earth—though I didn't tell Tombarel so) I derived inestimable benefit. I decided that when I should no longer have to paint ugly people for a living, I would build a little house on top of a Maritime Alp—with chair and mat in bathroom—and live there for the rest of my days.

Of course you will remember that I had been familiar for some years with the tiny town which, from far off, looked like a queer-shaped wasp's nest perched on a peak in the middle of a gorge; that I had met many of its notables and, thanks to Tombarel, knew more than they suspected of their personal histories. But not till now had I dwelt among them as a fellow citizen, seeing them daily and gleaning knowledge of things that had escaped casual observation. For instance:

To enter Creille one must take the path that branches off the main road above and lands you declivitously into the Place Georges Clemenceau with the perky Hôtel du Commerce on your

left and the Café Pogomas on your right. I had always been on friendly terms with Marius Pogomas, the proprietor, and had often sat with him over a glass, surveying the little sun-baked square, until I could have sworn I could record every object within sight.

But I had missed the Débit de Tabac, the government-controlled little tobacco shop away at the corner of the Grande Rue, the main thoroughfare of the town. I had passed it in the car on my way to and from Tombarel many times without noticing it. But one day, early in my visit, wandering on foot and bent on water-color distraction, I came upon it, a neat little shop with packets of tobacco and cigarettes and pipes and pictorial advertisements in the window, and newspapers on a wire file running up one jamb of the door.

Realizing that my stock of postage-stamps was running low, I entered. At the first glance the place seemed to be deserted. But in an instant there rose from behind the counter, like an Aphrodite rising from a dingy sea, a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl of sixteen, very good to look upon.

Now, you may go through the Italian end of Provence many days without seeing among the people any individual of what is now called the Nordic type. The sight of this girl was, therefore, arresting.

"*Monsieur désire—?*" she asked with a smile.

Monsieur desired some one-franc-fifty stamps for foreign postage. She looked in her drawer. The book of stamps contained only one of one-franc-fifty-denomination.

"There are more," she said, "but they are locked up and Maman has the key. I will call her."

Her mother appeared from the interior of the house in answer to the summons. She was the most amazingly southern mother of a Nordic child you can imagine. She was as swarthy as Cleopatra and almost as good-looking. A woman of brown buxomness, surely under forty.

She had bold gipsy eyes and a smiling mouth and the white, even teeth of a child. She was dressed with expensive simplicity in a one-piece frock, more or less in the mode of the day. A bright Chinese shawl was thrown over her shoulders, for it was chilly. A string of pearls, which I could have sworn were real, hung round her neck, and on a finger of her plump right hand she wore an emerald ring. Imitation, of course. I took it for granted.



She smiled at me engagingly and explained that she was not often asked for one-franc-fifty stamps. The inhabitants of Creille had few relations with foreign countries. At the postoffice there was an inexhaustible supply. But she thought she had some. She would look.

She flashed me a glance of encouragement and turned, key in hand, to a lock-up place. Sure enough she had a little stock of twelve. I handed her a note which she passed to the fair-haired girl.

"Elva, give change to Monsieur."

Elva! Was ever such a name heard before in Provence?

While the girl was fumbling in the till, with the worried brow of the young calculator, her mother said:

"You are the great painter who is staying with Monsieur le Maire?"

"I am staying with Monsieur le Maire, it is true," said I modestly.

She threw up a well-shaped chin and laughed. "All Creille knows you, Monsieur. Did you not paint the portrait of Monsieur Tombarel that hangs in the *mairie*? And did you not choose the site for the Monument de la Guerre? Are you not an honorary citizen of Creille?"

"Madame," said I, "you overwhelm me. How did you know?"

"Everything is known in Creille the moment it happens—often before," she said. "Worse luck!"

I laughed, received my change from the fair-haired girl, and bowed myself out.

I sat at dinner that evening with Tombarel and the Abbé Cabassol, the *curé* of the funny little patch-work church just behind the Place de la Mairie. Monsieur l'Abbé Cabassol was gaunt and grizzled; one of those men who seem to shave every other day and whom you are destined to meet always on the day that has intervened. He had a habit of rubbing his cheeks softly as though he loved to hear them rasp.

His complexion was as rusty as his old cassock, and his hands were knotted from good honest digging in his presbytery garden. But he had a merry roguish eye and an expert knowledge of the ways of this wicked world that would have bewildered a confidence trickster. And with it all, said Tombarel, a heart of gold.

At home he lived like an anchorite; abroad, say at Tombarel's table, he saw no shame in feasting with the relish of an alderman.



"Here's a new one," cried the curé, as the jockey-capped girl came in.

He was a man of some education, conversant with current politics and the French classics, and loved a good story, especially when it was flavored with an epicure's touch of the Rabelaisian.

Although he and Tombarel were old cronies, this was the first time I had met him in anything like social intimacy, and in a short while I felt myself to be a crony too. We talked wine and wisdom.

We had had soup—a *petite marmite*; we had eaten trout caught that afternoon by one of Tombarel's myrmidons in the stream a couple of miles away, and it had been accompanied by a delicate white wine from Tombarel's own vineyard. Angélique brought



La Zublena exulted in the bluff she was playing on Creille.

in a great coarse dish on which a chicken lay amid rice and pimento and the gracious perfume of hot ambrosia.

"Poulet Henri Quatre, Messieurs."

The poulet, Angélique and the three messieurs were thus consecrated into an indissoluble quintet. The bon Dieu had brought the five of us together.

"And here is some old Jurançon to drink with it," said Tombarel, lifting a bottle from the table. "It is strange how the wine and the dish should harmonize, for, as you know, it is the wine with which Henri Quatre was baptized in Pau."

"The year in which the circus came to Creille," said the curé. Tombarel seemed in no way to

(Continued on page 160)



*Illustrations by
John H. Crosman*

C"I had come upon a genuine personality in the shape of a woman physically intriguing and mentally stimulating . . . yet I had the feeling that Olive Brand did not know herself."

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By Theodore Dreiser

A Search into a WOMAN'S SOUL

Olive Brand

THE way in which I came to meet Olive Brand was through a bookish lawyer—a lean and disagreeable—Cassius of the old Greenwich Village world, by the way—who was giving a dinner to Olive and some friends of hers at The Black Cat, in the days when that institution was still in full bloom. She was then the wife of a Western lumberman of great wealth, who had permitted her to come East for a visit. At the time she was the guest of a feather-brained editor and his wife, friends of the lawyer, all of whom prided themselves on being in touch with all that was uppermost "villagey," intellectually and otherwise.

Olive, as I discovered at this dinner, was considered a find. She was rich, she was intellectual, but better still, youthful, vivacious and beautiful, with black hair, heavy and glossy, and parted Spanish fashion over a low, ivory-tinted forehead, and with warm, direct and glowing almond-shaped eyes. Her ivory-tinted neck and arms were beautifully rounded, and in a Spanish-appearing dress, shawl, earrings, a high comb, I recall thinking amusedly that really, for a lady from Spokane, this was an exceptionally Castilian effect.

There was a poet present whose name was rather widely flung at the time—tall and curly-haired—and him, as I noted, she devoured with her eyes. And flattered, he repaid her with toasts and compliments of the broadest and most saccharine nature. Also, there was an anarchist editor and writer of that day, who, taken by the beauty of the newcomer, bellowed against wealth and privilege while smothering her with drunken compliments. And a journalist (remember him well please, if you will) who, possessed of means and some leisure, was doing New York—a column—for one of the leading Sunday supplements.

Then there were, but wait . . . Suffice it to say here that the table was tightly surrounded by at least a score of middle-aged as well as young men and women of various walks and professions, all of whom seemed to find in Olive a type as well as a central character. And she, as I could see, was the most interesting as well as the most attractive woman present.

One day not long after that dinner my telephone bell rang, and a cooing female voice greeted me. Had she interrupted me? Would I forgive her, please? This was Olive Brand speaking. Did I remember her? (I did.) She had had it in mind to invite me to come to see her but circumstances had not permitted. She had asked others since to bring me but they had failed. Hence this intrusion. Would I come this evening to dinner with her?

No? Why would I make myself so very difficult? However, she understood. But tomorrow there was a small and really interesting group going with her to a Bohemian hall on the East Side. A remarkable folk-play was being given there in Bohemian and by native actors. Would I see that with her? She described enough of it to interest me. I agreed to go.

As she had predicted, the play was interesting—decidedly—and suggested, in texture at least, "The Power of Darkness," by Tolstoy. I gathered then what I had really not known before, that she was genuinely impressed and troubled by what I, for one, deemed the incurable ills of life, but which she, for another, did not look upon as so hopelessly irremediable. Life was going a little forward—or should—however slowly. Her reading of history, as she explained, seemed to convey as much to her.

At the same time, while not for too drastic, or, perhaps, I would better say, nihilistic action herself, still, in connection with the grave battles then being waged between capital and labor in America, she was all for the betterment of the condition of labor. The wretched sweat-shop workers on the East Side! The hat and silk workers in Danbury and Paterson! How wretched was

their state! Already, as I now learned, she had been to both cities in connection with labor battles of one kind and another. There were Bill Heywood, Emma Goldman, Ben Reitman, Moyer, Pettibone—she knew them all, as, indeed, the embattled leaders in a dozen labor contests—and even before coming to New York.

We indulged in one of those long, and maybe futile, arguments which carried us to her apartment, through a midnight supper, and finally got me to my own rooms at three A.M. By now I was convinced that I had come upon a genuine personality in the shape of a woman, physically intriguing and mentally stimulating. More, I judged her to possess a warm and comforting humanity which would not let her rest entirely at ease in the face of human misery anywhere. Largely by reason of her sympathies, as I judged, she was compelled to read, ponder, talk, investigate—go here, there, anywhere, in order to see, hear, and so learn at first hand for herself.

I began to think that in spite of all I had heard thus far as to her emotional and varietistic tendencies—or because of these, maybe—we should hear more of her intellectually later on.

A thing that interested me at this time as much as anything else in connection with Olive Brand was the tempo, or mood, in which her apartment was furnished. "Sumptuous" is a fairly accurate word to use here. Apparently the lumberman had opened his purse and told her to select as she wished.

From the feminine or sex point of view, she was very much sought after and decidedly varietistic, and this in the face of the liberal husband in the West. And for that reason, I was inclined at times, but more especially at first, to think meanly of her.

BUT throughout these contacts I had sought to make it clear that mine was purely a mental interest. Nevertheless, and in spite of this reserve, I eventually found that I, like so many others, was being set apart for an adventure. No one thing at first carried any such import, of course. She was always "hail fellow" to all. But she had the most ingratiating of smiles and a way of throwing up her arms when she saw one coming that said more plainly than words, "Welcome!" And she had, always, some little special news to trade with one.

After a time, as I noticed, and just the same, she began inviting me alone. Now it was to listen to some music, which she could interpret either vocally or instrumentally very well indeed. Or she had a new and rare book with which I was by no means familiar. It was so that I came to know of Doughty and "Arabia Deserta." Also, of Freud's "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex." (At her place later I met the American emissary of that great Austrian interpreter of the prime moving impulse of life.)

One day at luncheon in her apartment, the implication became almost too obvious. There was wine and the smoke of incense. She had a playful way of arranging a chair for you, then throwing down a pillow for herself at your feet and bringing a low footstool from which could be served coffee, or candy, or fruit, or upon which a book might be placed, or some pictures displayed. And she knew exactly into what graceful poses to sink.

But before all this we had been in the kitchen together concocting some of the wonders of the feast, myself as cook's helper and scullion. And it was during this time, and to aid in the matter of progress I make no doubt, that she began telling me the story of her life.

She claimed she never understood her father in any way, and that at eighteen she was positively tormented by a desire to go against all the commonplaces and solemnities that he represented. One day then, browsing among the book-shelves of the local

library, she encountered a young lawyer of whom she knew nothing, a career-seeker from somewhere else. He was engaging and good-looking. This was in Salt Lake, Utah. He helped her with her search and made some suggestions as to books with which he was acquainted. He told her where his office was and contrived a reencounter in this place, a most convenient realm. Later, he invited her to his place.

And so this affair absorbed her for over a year. As she told me now, she liked him only fairly well. But the laughing excuse she gave for being interested so long was that it was so difficult for her to see him at all that the very difficulties fired her interest. Hence the thing took on the tang of a real adventure. You may depend upon it that he



was already married. But the thing that brought this incident to a close was neither danger nor disaster, but weariness—the feeling that in spite of this, her life was circumscribed and that the adventure was not very significant.

After a few months she began to guess that her lover was not so remarkable after all, and that she had rather disadvantaged herself. He was still satisfied with his wife, who had means, and relinquished Olive philosophically enough.

Next, about this time there appeared on the scene the husband-to-be, the Spokane and Alaska lumberman, who had been previously described to me (but never by her) as a gross materialist and bounder. According to her, although good-looking and wealthy, he had the type of mind that is limited absolutely by what may be seen by the eye, felt by the hands, counted by numbers, or measured with a yardstick. For him there was no hinterland, unless it should prove one of insane, religious or political illusion.

Most of all, he worshiped money and all that it stood for—ample lands, large houses, expensive furnishings, bank-accounts, directorships, the companionship of social acknowledgment, at least of his position and security by others, who, like himself, had achieved money.

In this connection she had something to say concerning her father. As you recall, she early stated that she had never understood him. Well, now, in this business of settling her in marriage she understood him even less.

As she had always gathered from his conversation—or so she said—there was one thing that was important in life, and that was one's religion, and by religion in his case, be it understood, he meant not Christianity at large but the particular sect of which

he was a participating unit. The sect it was that was important—his church, its membership, the social and commercial favor which brisk and attentive union with it here assured him.

None the less, prospective husband appearing on the scene, and having no valiant faith but rather a thin and tentative connection with another sect, he was immediately escorted to the family home to meet daughter, because, forsooth, as father and mother well understood and as much as said, it was time that she was getting married. And religion or no religion, here was a rich man!

At least, she would have great wealth. Then, too, all she had been taught to believe in regard to securing for herself a comfortable marriage berth before it should be too late, operated to strengthen the thought that after the lawyer it might be the better part of caution to protect herself with a marriage certificate. Accordingly, since he wrote, they corresponded. He came again. She decided, so she said, that once she was married she could do about as she chose, anyhow.

So why not? And when he came again, she agreed.

Olive Brand

OLIVE, the wife of a Spokane lumberman, was the most interesting and attractive woman present.

Followed a real church wedding, with Olive carrying lilies. Then a visit to Hawaii, where were some commercial matters to look into—even on the honeymoon—and then to Spokane.

By today, no doubt, no one need have described to him the intellectual and spiritual aridity of the up-and-doing American city of the nineteenth-in-population, seventeenth-in-financial-and-other-resources type. Still, as Olive told it, it made interesting listening.

Despite all this, and the fact that this young matron was then little more than sly, sensual, tricky and ambitious, there was something else in her that was destined to change her, and change

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her very fast. It was not, as she was now beginning to see, money alone that she wanted. Perhaps she had just reached the place where she was beginning to find herself. At any rate, the atmosphere tended to throw her back upon herself and to emphasize her interest in things which were not like this.

She began, as she said, to buy and read important books—histories, novels, biographies. Naturally, she began to look about her for some measure of active mental life. But as yet she held only membership cards of the Eat & Drink Country Club, the Sunny Slope Golf Club, the Pebble Beach Boat Club—and, coincidentally, husband was making it clear that he wanted his wife to become a power socially here, just as he was becoming a power financially. He urged her constantly to invite and entertain as many of those who could be of any service to him as the house would hold.

Her ambition did not lie that way. She shirked and dawdled over the task, she said. They began to quarrel. Worse, she made common cause with a young matron of her own years who was

young poet and radical with whom Olive proceeded to carry on a desperate flirtation. She was strong for poets, as I gathered. This fellow's name was Githeroe, later killed in a labor fight, as she told me, and he it was who introduced her to the literature and leaders of the radical world—to Strindberg, Ibsen, Gorki, Kropotkin, Henry George, and Marx. Further, because of love, he visited her at her home, and it was not long before hints were being given to H. B. Brand, Esquire, her husband, that all was not well in his domestic world. His wife and Mrs. Realtor had been seen in the camp in question. A particular radical from the camp was visiting his own home from time to time when he was not there.

Followed a great conjugal storm. Brand wanted to know the facts and was supplied with half-truths. She had been unsophisticatedly inquiring, that was all. These radicals were not a bad sort—very intelligent. What was wrong with them?

Being a prominent and successful figure in the nineteenth-city-in-population, and a member of the chamber of commerce, he had a very great deal to say as to what was wrong with them. They were a lot of rotten firebrands, anarchists, socialists! They ought to be arrested and locked up, drummed out of the country!

He wouldn't have such cattle coming to his home, and she must not be seen any more within miles of the camp. If she couldn't or wouldn't associate with the best people of her world, very well, but she couldn't associate with these others, either.

She would ruin herself and him—which was, no doubt, true.

At first enraged, Brand was later dismayed and even terrified. He stayed home to argue with her. She would not change. He followed her into a bedroom where she had gone, and standing behind her in silence, finally exclaimed: "What's the matter with me, Olive, anyhow? Ain't I good enough? Is that it?"

There was something in his tone, according to her, that was both defeated and sad. For the first time in all their period of contact, as she now said, that self-sufficiency and bravado with which he overawed others, herself included, appeared to have oozed out of him. She wanted to sympathize and to explain, but she realized it was hopeless. He could not understand her. At bottom she could scarcely understand him. And only away from him, as she said she knew at the time, would she be able to prevent herself from hating him. All that she could say was that it was impossible for her to stay.

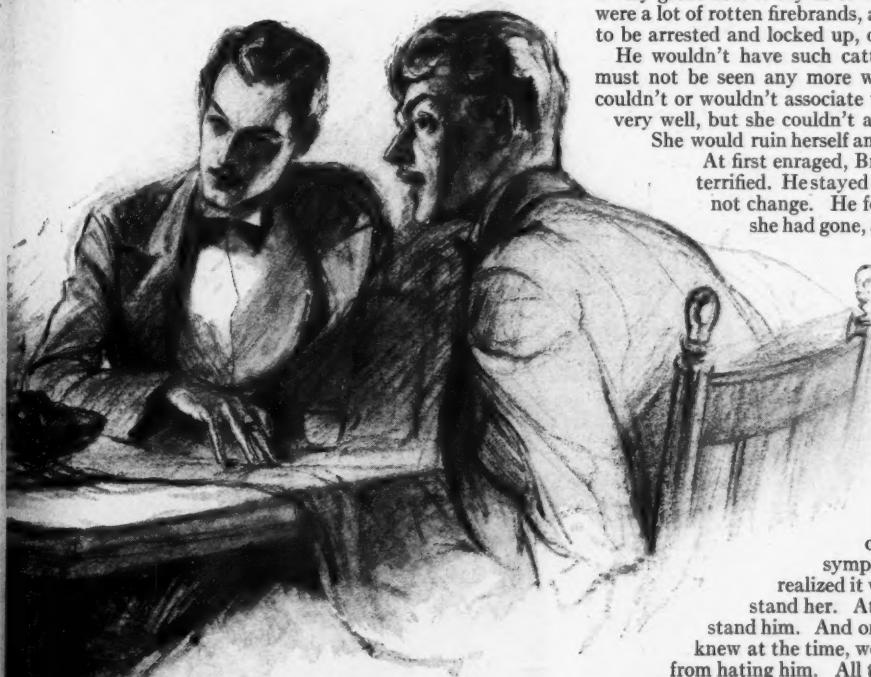
Then he made suggestions. Why leave for good? If she wanted to go to New York, all right, he would let her—pay her expenses and tuition at Columbia—providing that when the time was up (two years, she had said)—she would agree to return and try him and this world out once more. Maybe they could get along after all. He himself might change. And once in a while, would she let him look her up in New York, just to say hello? He would swear to make only a friendly call, not a thing more . . .

Oh, yes, and one condition more—so long as he was paying the expenses, wouldn't she agree not to have anything to do with any of these radicals, especially the poet, and refrain from being unfaithful until she decided to quit for good?

Thus, as I now gathered, it was something like this that was behind the New York apartment, the car, the furniture and objects of art. Naturally, he wished her to live as became the wife of one H. B. Brand. Among other things, as I gathered later, he handed her a paid-up lease for three years.

But despite the fact that I did not get the exact nature of their compact at first, I was not sufficiently interested to be moved by it. I was not in love with Olive Brand, and the insoluble ills that spring from conflicting temperaments left me cold. I could see value only in separation at almost any cost. The one thing I could not relish was the thought of her using his means to disport herself in loose living and romance. Yet, who was I to write the exact law of social relationship?

She interested me as a temperament, and does to this day, ten years after she is dead. I had the feeling at the time, and still have, that maybe she did not quite know herself, or that, at most, certain chemic fires burned so high that (Continued on page 130)



feeling herself to be almost as unsatisfactorily situated. She was the wife of a real estate plunger who had some money, and she craved a good time, but not of the conventional stripe. Rather, she tended to radical action and was intensely interested in radicals.

Some fifteen or twenty miles from the city in which Olive was now residing was a Western radical resort, or camp, in which were hibernating at this time a number of writers and agitators interested in the deadly labor union wars of the West. Some were Swedish and Norwegian, others American or English labor leaders of repute. The colony had a bad name locally because early it had been rumored that some of those who lived there as man and wife were not married. As yet there was no proof, and so no public storm, but the fact that they were radicals and identified with the cause of labor was sufficient to cast suspicion on the entire company.

Yet for reasons of her own, this new friend of Olive's held a kindly feeling toward this group. From a friend who was the wife of one of the leaders of this colony she had learned much that interested her of the thoughts and aims of these people. Did not Olive want to meet some of them? There were interesting mental as well as social contacts to be found there. Did not Olive want to go? And so it was that at last these two ventured among them.

And as she now explained, the atmosphere of the place was fascinating. There was little money but much thought and personal intellectual intensity. Among them dwelt, for instance, a

Darkened

A New Novel

Illustrations by
Sydney Seymour-Lucas

The Story So Far:

POSSESSED of what he felt to be supernormal powers, which he had cultivated since childhood, Emery Jago set himself up as a medium under the guise of an "artist-photographer" in Brixton, London. Using his hypnotic influence, he induced Belle Chubb, a poor half-starved dancing-girl, to live with him as his "sister" and help him in his séances. On her part she had developed a gift for crystal-gazing, which once intensely distressed her when she saw in the depths of the globe a lovely lady in the arms of Jago.

But Emery hugged this vision to himself, for he identified this unknown inamorata with a girl that another medium, Mrs. Laveray, had foreseen in his future—a girl with diamonds in her bronze-colored hair.

Rich and cultured people became interested in him. Persuaded by Lady Ardington, who found Jago a marvelous person, Adrian Mallard, K.C., a leading criminal lawyer, brought his friends, Rose Jaffrey, a famous young actress, Professor Rupert Boyd, a psychologist, and Wilfred Neal, a protégé of Mallard's, to the Brixton psychic. They came to scoff, more or less, but when through the lips of Belle Chubb, deep in a trance, came a spirit message from Ivo Mallard, the younger brother of Adrian who was killed in the Great War, the effect was serious. While Adrian rejected the supernatural origin of the communication, he could not shake off the inexplicable occurrence.

When his visitors had taken their leave Emery Jago turned to Belle Chubb and remarked that the woman in the party had bronze-colored hair, but his exhausted, white-faced "sister" did not know what was in his mind.

After driving Rose Jaffrey home, the three men adjourned to Mallard's flat for discussion and a drink. Young Neal disliked the subject of spiritualism and soon excused himself. But Mallard and Boyd were keenly interested. The alleged spirit of Ivo had said to Adrian, "Watch your step with the pretty ladies!" and this gave Boyd a chance to warn his friend against the intimacy growing between him and Rose—people had begun to talk. Adrian was married but he and his wife Evelyn went their separate ways. He was passionately in love with Rose.

Angered by what Boyd intimated, Adrian Mallard had a bad heart attack and fell prone to the floor, frightening Professor Boyd terribly.

The hastily summoned doctor told Adrian it was angina pectoris. "It is a sentence of death," thought the stricken lawyer, though he temporarily recovered. And once again he was drawn to Jago the medium and again heard startling things from "Ivo."

Mallard went to his country house in Surrey for the summer. Rose and her father rented a place near by. And the romance between the young actress and Adrian blossomed. It was rumored that his wife would get a divorce. But Mallard felt he was doomed never to marry again because of his "sentence of death." Torn by conflicting emotions, Mallard asked Boyd what he thought of getting Jago and his assistant down for some demonstrations. They planned to do so.



IT WAS Boyd kept Mallard up to the idea of getting those two mediums, Emery Jago and his "sister" Belle, down into the country for experimental purposes. Mallard had weakened on the subject because of young Neal.

"Billy doesn't like that sort of thing," he said. "He regards it as next door to blasphemy."

Boyd pooh-poohed this objection. "Billy can go and play chess with old Jaffrey if he disapproves of scientific experiments."

"Well, anyhow, they mayn't care to come," said Mallard. But they did care to come. Emery Jago sent a very well written letter accepting Mallard's invitation to spend a week in the gardener's cottage next door and to arrange a few séances in the evenings. He suggested three, and in answer to Mallard's



Boyd grabbed Belle and the trumpet clattered to the

inquiry as to terms proposed a fee of twenty guineas, which sum was to include a few sittings with the crystal if his sister felt inclined.

"My sister," he added, "has been a little run down lately and country air will do her good. That is an additional reason for accepting an invitation which appeals to me personally, as I am much interested in the spirit of your brother Ivo who has again come through."

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Rooms

By SIR Philip Gibbs



table. Jago's voice rang out harshly. "This is abominable! Turn up the light, someone."

Mallard passed this letter over the breakfast table to Boyd one morning.

"That fellow is either sincere, or a most abominable charlatan," he remarked. "Which do you think, Boyd?"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Boyd.

It was not until two or three days later that Mallard mentioned the matter to young Neal.

Somehow he felt rather ashamed, as though confessing to some

Those doctors had made too much of a temporary breakdown—and cost him a lot of agony and weeks of morbid thought.

He intended to consult another specialist.

It was Billy who drove down to the station to fetch Jago and his girl. That was decent of him after his frank dislike of "spook stuff," as he called it.

They arrived at tea time when Rose and her father were there, having been warned previously about these strange visitors.

mental weakness, and he was not surprised at the boy's protest.

"Oh Lord! I wouldn't if I were you, sir. There's something beastly about it all."

"Yes," said Mallard. "I feel like that too. And yet I can't help feeling interested. It's so vastly important, after all, and Boyd is going to put it to the test scientifically. Supposing you heard spirit voices, Billy, would you refuse to believe—whatever the evidence of truth?"

"I don't hold with spooks," said young Neal impatiently. "In my opinion—not that I know anything about it of course—they're probably devils playing hob with credulous minds."

"Then you don't deny the possibility of spirit manifestations?" asked Mallard. "It's not against the faith of your church?"

Wilfred Neal laughed.

"On the contrary, I should say. But I'm not an authority, sir. I know we were warned not to touch this sort of thing. That's good enough for me, and anyhow I'm not interested. By the way, why are you off tennis these days?"

Mallard indulged in a little camouflage.

"I'm not so young as I was, Billy. Old age creeping on!"

"Oh rot, sir!" laughed young Neal. "You could run me round the common and leave me for dead. Let's have a singles."

"Well, not this morning. I'm rather busy with some law work. Tomorrow, perhaps."

He ached to play a set of tennis again. He had a good mind to do so and take the risk. It was rather rubbish about his heart. He felt perfectly fit now. It was probably just a scare after a hard innings in the courts.

Darkened Rooms

Rose had expressed a mild uneasiness, looking at Mallard with a certain anxiety.

"Isn't it rather dangerous?" she asked. "I mean one might be drawn into rather unhealthy things."

Boyd fathered the idea, to relieve Mallard of any embarrassment.

"It's my notion, Miss Jaffrey. It's part of my job, in a way. A psychologist can't ignore this kind of thing."

Mr. Jaffrey thought they might have some very interesting evenings if Mallard allowed them to be present. Then he smiled and waved his hand at Boyd.

"If any spirit passes that skeptic there will be no room for disbelief. Personally, I'm on the side of the angels, in spite of all my sins."

THEY were sitting at tea in Mallard's drawing-room looking out upon the terrace through an open loggia above the little Dutch garden with its tall stone dove-cote in the center of the rose-trees. Innumerable bees were busy in the catnip growing on the stone walls about the crazy pavement and made a soft, deep chant.

Presently there was the sound of a motor-car coming down the drive and making a sharp sweep to the front door.

"Here they are!" said Mallard with a rather nervous laugh. "That queer couple!"

"We shall have to be kind to them," said Rose. "That white-faced girl—I dare say she will feel shy at first . . . And I shall certainly feel shy of that strange young man. There's something very odd about him."

"Don't forget his name," said Boyd. "Jago. Rather a queer name."

Mallard went into the hall to meet them. They could hear Billy's voice making himself polite.

"You'll like the garden. It's topping."

Then Mallard: "I hope you had a good journey. Not too tired, eh?"

He brought them into the drawing-room just as Boyd had winked at Rose Jaffrey as though to say, "This is going to be rather amusing."

"Come in," said Mallard cheerily. "We're just having tea and I'm sure you'll want some . . . Let me introduce you."

Belle Chubb held on to Emery Jago's hand for a moment. She wore a plain black frock with a white collar hardly whiter than her face. She looked ill, with dark lines beneath her eyes, and only her lips were smiling as Mallard introduced her to the company. She seemed frightened.

Emery appeared to be perfectly at ease except for a faint flush of color which crept into his usual pallor. He wore a suit of gray cloth, ready-made by the look of it, and brown boots which were new and just a touch too yellow. His hair was rather long, as usual, and Rose noticed again his small delicate womanish hands.

For a few moments while Belle was being introduced, he stood motionless with a fixed smile and quick searching eyes which roved about the room taking in every detail, until they stared at Rose Jaffrey. She had her back to one of the windows so that her face was shadowed. Perhaps for that reason he had not seen her at first glance. Boyd, who was watching him, noticed that he gave a sudden and perceptible start when Mallard mentioned her name to Belle and his dark eyes seemed to become more luminous for a moment.

"Probably he has seen her at the theater," thought Boyd. "She puts a spell on people when she's acting. A great gift that. Indefinable."

"You have met Miss Jaffrey before," Mallard was saying. "That night we all came on from the Carlton."

Emery Jago bowed gravely, and was uncertain for a moment whether he ought to shake hands. Rose Jaffrey in her kind way put him at ease by holding out her hand and he held it for a moment longer than he ought to have done, as she afterwards told Mallard, commenting on the delicacy of his hands. "Like a woman's," she said.

Belle was sitting on the window-seat next to Rose, and young Neal brought her some strawberries and cream and a cup of tea which he placed on a small table by her side.

"Thanks, most awfully!" she said, as though unaccustomed to be waited on like this by an elegant young man.

"Do you like the country?" asked Rose.

"I can't say I'm very familiar with it," answered Belle, choosing her words carefully. "It looks priceless, I must say."

She gave one quick timid look at the garden through the open window and then made a little exclamation of delight:

"Oh, ain't them roses lovely!"

That remark which broke from her so naturally was followed by a painful blush and she glanced timidly at Emery Jago who was looking at her with disapproval.

She corrected herself hurriedly. "I mean, aren't those roses nice! Don't you think so, Em?"

"Beautiful," he said quietly. "This is a hiding-place of beauty. A world away from the Brixton Road!"

After tea, Mallard took them to the gardener's cottage next door and showed them their rooms upstairs. Their luggage had already been taken there and Mallard noticed that they had brought only two shabby bags. No bulky apparatus anyhow, for raising spirits!

"I hope you will be quite comfortable here," he said. "The gardener and his wife will look after you. Mrs. Lympos is a very good cook. If you like strawberries and raspberries the fruit garden will be glad to see you, though you will find Professor Boyd has picked the best, I'm afraid."

He tried to make them feel at ease and then spoke a friendly word to the girl, so white and shy.

"I should sit in the garden as much as possible, if I were you, Miss Jago. Try and get some color in your cheeks, eh?"

"Yes," said Emery, answering for her. "Ultra-violet rays—that's what she wants. We live too much in the dark at that little house in Brixton. It's no fun being a medium, in spite of the interest of the work."

Then he inquired about the time Mr. Mallard would like to arrange the first séance. They were quite ready to begin at once—that very evening if he liked. Of course it might be a failure. He was not at all sure that anything would happen away from his usual environment. No doubt Mr. Mallard and Professor Boyd would understand the difficulties—the trickiness, as he might say—of getting into the right psychic state in a perfectly strange place.

"You ought to rest this evening," said Mallard. "That will give you time to get familiar with your surroundings. There's no hurry at all."

He left them there in the gardener's cottage after introducing them to Mrs. Lympos who was going to look after them—a cheerful, chatty soul who would make them feel quite at home. As he left the room he saw the girl—Belle, as Jago called her—turn to him with a kind of frightened look, and Mallard wondered for a moment if Jago ill-treated her or played the bully.

That fellow had a quiet plausible way with him, but there was no knowing what his character was like in private life.

THE first séance in Mallard's house was arranged for nine o'clock next evening, and before that time Emery and Belle came up from the cottage and were shown into the library, while Mallard and Professor Boyd and young Neal were lingering over coffee in the dining-room.

Boyd had met Emery and the girl in the fruit garden that morning and he had had a long talk with the man, sitting on a stone seat below the tennis-court, while Belle had wandered around looking at the flowers.

"I'm bound to say I'm rather impressed," said Boyd. "That fellow Jago has read up his subject all right. He knows a good deal about psychology, and all the literature of psychic stuff. He quotes Geley, and Richet, and Tischner, and Osty, and Ostwald and others, regarding supernormal faculties and psychic energy. Rather extraordinary for a photographer in Brixton. Devilish plausib'e, too. Doesn't claim too much. Admits that he doesn't understand much about his own mysterious powers and suspects that some of these so-called phenomena are due to mental telepathy and the workings of the subconscious mind."

Mallard's man, Sadler, came into the room and made an announcement.

"The young persons are in the library, sir."

Mallard waited a few minutes until Mr. Jaffrey and Rose came, and another few minutes while Mr. Jaffrey drank a glass of port and declaimed a line or two from some old play:

"What though youth gave love and roses?
Age still leaves us friends and wine."

He raised his glass to Mallard and Boyd with a noble gesture.

Rose was in a frock of wine-colored silk cut low at the shoulders, and the candle-light on the polished table seemed to shine in her eyes.

"I feel excited," she said, "and rather wicked!"

"It's your goodness that will save us from evil spirits," said young Neal, smiling at her with a look of admiration.

"Oh, a pretty laughing eyes.
And true, mouth."
Then they were waiting for the



¶For the first time Rose Jaffrey knew the horror of stage fright. Her mind called aloud to Mallard: "My dear, my dear, I need you now! Come and give me courage."

"Oh, a pretty speech!" she cried, and looked at Mallard with laughing eyes.

"And true," said Mallard. "Billy took the words out of my mouth."

Then they went into the library where Emery and Belle were waiting for them.

Emery wore his black velvet jacket over a black waistcoat

and trousers, with a big black tie round his neck like a stock, so that he was all dark except for his pallid face and luminous eyes. Belle wore a black frock without touch of color and looked very slim and frail. No color had crept into her cheeks yet from the country air.

They were standing by the table when Mallard and his friends came in, and Emery was fixing up a (Continued on page 169)

The Foolish Forties



C"Hooray! I've been insulted! A man just followed me four blocks and spoke to me." Finding favor in the eye of a promiscuous male is more of a tonic than an offense after you have crossed the border into the Foolish Forties.

by Richard V. Culter



One of the hardest camouflages to put over, when the Foolish Forties have claimed you, is to try to look eager while waiting to see if the dance orchestra is going to play the seventh encore.

*Illustrations by
W. Smithson Broadhead*

REMB

By
EMIL LUDWIG

In this instalment we take up the life of the genius, Rembrandt, where we left it last month. At that time he had left the country mill, gone to Amsterdam, achieved swift fame as a portrait-painter, and married a rich and beautiful young woman, Saskia. But burnt out by the white heat of life with Rembrandt, Saskia soon died, leaving him with a young son, Titus—and a great loneliness.



BEYOND the city, a man sat on a rock by the wayside, drawing. He would glance at the landscape, observing more sharply the tree as it bent beneath the sea breeze. Then he would look at the page on his knee and faithfully reproduce the line which he had noted. As the roof of a hut emerged, one corner of it should also be included. The reflection in the pool, the vibrancy of the atmosphere—the master's unerring hand transcribed all this just as the eye had beheld it between half-closed lids. Rembrandt in nature.

In recent years, when his art was becoming noticeably more reticent, he had gone out occasionally to draw the quiet monotony of his homeland, and afterwards when he returned he had also worked up some of these subjects into etchings.

He continued this practise over a period of fifteen years. This segment of his life following Saskia's death, a protracted phase in his development which lasted until he was fifty-two, marks his most important years as an etcher. No wonder; for in his shock

at the loss of his delight, how could he better find refuge than by getting as far from the glamor of society as possible, and plunging silently, humbly and fervently into the task of transferring to a little metal plate, by means of a few hundred strokes, the spirit of a peasant's courtyard?

Following his dual calamity, a friend, Jan Six, invited the painter to visit him in the country. For some time he stayed there quietly and resignedly, working in the open. For now he no longer feared the daylight, from the glare of which he had previously kept his visions guarded. The turn in his life caused by the loss of wife and fame had driven the brilliant, lordly Rembrandt away from jewels and fabrics, away from the artistic atmosphere of his studio. He came now to observe the quiet processes of nature, the depths of which had heretofore remained almost foreign to him.

When he returned to the house from which the love and animation had been taken, the painter was gloomy and unsteady; and for a time his desires took on a sinister tinge, as though he wanted to parody with the grimaces of cynicism the interrupted comedy of love which he had so repeatedly exalted. His little son's nurse was a stout, colossus woman, the widow of a trumpeter. It was not likely that she would live long in Rembrandt's house unnoticed while he was a widower. Geertje was irritable and coarse, well on to forty. She pondered how best to angle for the painter.

During these years of their association, he expressed his emotion

in a series of figures, with times altered, the lascivious, pornographic, consummate artist with the pictures of

Yet at the he felt the need day to call home Rembrandt painter imagined herself these strange chains about he painted but not appeared.

Yet as he to indicate the renunciation other of her knowledge the woman has to forgive him, living man? of emotion

MB R A N D T



For years Rembrandt preferred to paint the three partners--himself, his delicate and beautiful son, and Hendrickje Stoffels.

in a series of obscene etchings where the nurse necessarily figured, with her personal features sometimes copied and sometimes altered. There is Eulenspiegel, darting faulike glances at the lascivious maid while he plays the flute. Also we find some pornographic sheets, and one large one among them which is a consummate work of genius; here passion is conveyed by the artist with the same skill and mastery as may be found in any of his pictures of beggars or saints.

Yet at the same time, Saskia again appeared in a dream; and as he felt the need of her, yet could not summon her, he decided one day to call her back in his own way, by his own methods. Rembrandt painted Saskia once more, a year after her death. He imagined her in a golden-yellow dress with wine-red sleeves. For these strange obsequies, he hung the most beautiful of Saskia's chains about the breast and throat and head of this spirit; and as he painted her left hand, he showed the wedding-ring which had not appeared in any earlier picture of her when alive.

Yet as he peers into the Beyond, what expression does he find to indicate the mood of the departed? There is resignation here, renunciation and a kind of smile which had not figured in any other of her pictures. He places in her eyes and on her lips the knowledge that, since he is energetic and alive, his interest in woman has continued. Is he not, after his fashion, begging her to forgive him, and to sympathize with him, because he is a man, a living man? The master has never elsewhere put such depths of emotion into the countenance of a woman. Here, at their

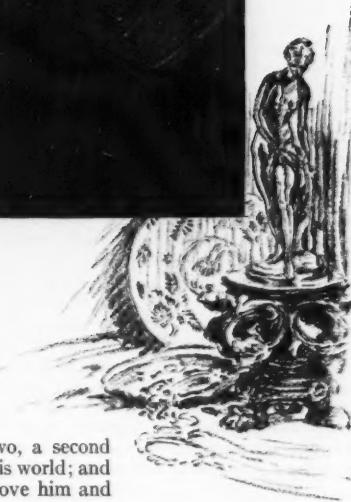
height, are two typical elements of Rembrandt's art: glamor and leave-taking.

It is a leave-taking. For within a year or two, a second woman was to step into his world; and like the first she would love him and serve him until death.

A peasant girl, a child of perhaps sixteen, in a rough apron. In this picture, as in half a dozen others, while she looks out of her kitchen window she is all freshness and roundness and has an unspeakably melancholy and questioning expression. She seems somewhat fair, but her eyes are black; and passion, a girl's unquenchable yearning for pleasure and annihilation, lies in this silent stare. What would he make of her when he had really observed her? Rembrandt was always faithful; he loved but two women in his life, and clung steadfastly to each of them until the end.

In every respect the sturdy Hendrickje Stoffels, an orphan from across the German border, was the opposite of the slender Frisian. When Saskia came to him she had been a small, graceful, vivacious elf, with quick, laughing, grayish-green eyes, delicate nostrils and virginal breasts. The dark eyes of the peasant look out heavily from her full features.

He accepted her at forty, to refresh himself with her full youth.



The TWO WOMEN REMBRANDT

SASKIA

©Reinthal & Newman, N. Y.



Shortly after their marriage, Rembrandt painted his wife as Susanna. Ten years afford a striking comparison of the two women Rembrandt loved—

He was captivated, and he soon began using her in a series of Biblical sketches. But the stout aging nurse would not relinquish him so easily. Now that she was in danger of losing him to a younger rival, she created a stir, swearing that the painter had definitely promised to marry her. Had she not done everything to please him, even to naming little Titus as her heir?

After twice ignoring a summons to court, Rembrandt finally appeared and denied that he had ever made any promise whatsoever. And as to their relationship otherwise, the burden of proof lay with the plaintiff.

When they reached an understanding, the trumpeter's widow was taken to a sanitarium, the painter bearing the costs.

IN WARMTH and silence, as though enveloped in the golden mist of a Rembrandtian room, those three people whom fate had brought together lived on in the big house: the painter; the maid who was for him mistress, model, and mother of his child; and this boy with the noble name who as he grew up was like a memento of the departed. For years Rembrandt hunted no tragic themes. He preferred to picture the three partners.

In a picture of himself and Hendrickje we have his own version of how he painted her; and on comparison with the two in which he is shown with Saskia, the change in him becomes all the more apparent. Now he no longer needed to array himself and his companion before the mirror as they drank to the world in front of them. It was only in one picture, which he painted of her naked beauty, that he put himself, so to speak, in the margin. And as is fitting, he is wholly a painter here, holding a palet rather than beaker or pearls.

Hendrickje also became Susanna, as Saskia had been before her; and on comparing these two Susannas, which are ten years apart yet resemble each other down to the smallest details of posture, we again have the comparison of two women—and also, of course, the contrast between two methods of painting, since he has developed from an unpliant clarity to glowing maturity.

Twice Hendrickje becomes Bathsheba after the bath; and in this case also a decade intervenes between the two pictures, so that here too one can see their beauty ripen. In the second picture, as she holds King David's letter in her hand and stares in front of her, and as doubt, weakness, sympathy and pleasure play across her mobile features and filter down into the warm dreaming nakedness, the effect is almost unparalleled in Rembrandt's work.

He often painted her nude, but not resplendent. We see her in a white rough cloak, in a simple pleated dress, or lying in bed with her boudoir cap; but even in that magnificent picture where she is, so to speak, impersonating, and wears Saskia's pear-shaped pendants, bracelet, and brooches, here too all ostentation of dress is avoided. All the brilliance derives from the features which, in their motherliness and devotion, show that her one desire is to serve the painter who had claimed her.

A few times at the beginning of this period Rembrandt dresses in finery for his self-portraits, though with a very discreet chain. Then once, visibly more as a model than a picture, he appears as *Lanzknecht*. The following pictures become plain and reserved. He has often made etchings of himself; yet he has drawn himself monumenally as he stands in the painter's frock: a worker, a man after the renunciation. He also etches himself at work: ugly, severely dressed, sharp-eyed and materialistic.

Only a few people entered this quiet circle. The Rabbi Menashe ben Israel remains true to him.

Orders were scarce, following the disillusionment of the Guardsmen's canvas, the so-called "Night Watch." A Portuguese refused to accept a lady's picture which he had ordered, claiming that it did not resemble the sitter, and demanding that the advance payments be returned to him. Rembrandt insisted that on receiving the full price he would finish the portrait and submit it to a committee in his guild for a decision.

Also, wealthy burghers who had once been his clients began to

fall away from Rembrandt for social reasons. He had first been injured by his legal difficulties with the nurse; and now he annoyed these Puritans by living with his maid unmarried. The painter did want to marry her, but the will and testament of the deceased wife stood between them. He might have been willing to renounce the income from her property, but Rembrandt, with his gipsy economy, did not relish giving an account of how he had managed the money for his son. He did not care to face the consequences.

Even after many years, when Hendrickje had become with child, and he would have liked to recognize both wife and child at once, Saskia's will still prevented him—and he had to look on in exasperation as the wife was brought before the elders of the church and, since her condition pronounced her guilty, the blameless creature was punished with excommunication. Hendrickje gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Cornelia, but the mother of the child could not appear before the world as the wife of the father: such were the dictates of the Frisian inheritance.

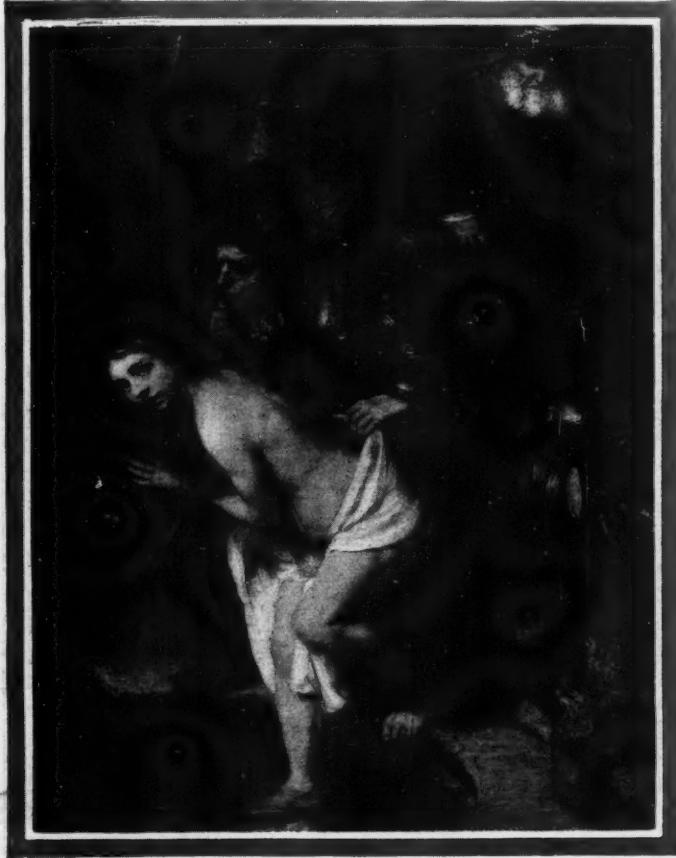
Now that he was graying and his understanding of life had become broader, Rembrandt was more and more strongly attracted to the silent victims of destiny. His works, which had previously been dramatic, became quieter, more like monologs; dealing now with fewer persons, they tended to become soliloquies. He used beggars to reconstruct the scenes of the Scriptures, reverting now to the New Testament, where the theme is one of suffering.

On almost a hundred sheets he depicted that aspect of the Scriptures which had always impressed him most profoundly: people who are pious and pleading, and who innocently suffer: Tobit blind, the vision of Daniel, Isaac sacrificed, Hagar repudiated, Joseph dreaming, David praying, the shepherds, the flight, the scribes, the Passion. They all yearn for a home; they are pure pilgrims. Here nothing is beautiful; the ugliness of primitive Christians and other seekers of the Divine breathes upon us.

LOVED and PAINTED as SUSANNA

Rudolf Leesch

HENDRICKJE



Later he painted her successor in the same rôle. Alike in details of posture, the pictures Caska the delicate patrician, and Hendrickje the sturdy peasant girl.

After whole decades of astounding industry, while he experimented with burin and dry-point, Japan paper and parchment, projecting and rejecting sketches in riddle, silver, chalk and pen, now one masterful page after another issues from his hands, and many copies of these spread among the people as though they had been done by some nameless author.

No, neither knowledge nor learning was required for people to appreciate these. It was necessary only to look at such a page in silence and they would feel: That is the way Tobit groped for the door when he heard the voice of his son; with such defensive, sibylline eyes a few poor fishermen in a cavern laid the unlovely body of the Crucified in its stony grave; just as it shows on that large sheet, for which people even then were paying up to a hundred guilders, Christ went among the Pharisees and the afflicted, teaching, healing, bringing salvation, like a god.

EVERYONE understood the unclean faces of these sated old men, even if he did not recognize Socrates among them; everyone felt why it could be only a child that led the doubters back to righteousness; everyone could see why one half of the page—and of the world—gleamed in bright, sharp outlines while the other half was groaning, overshadowed by the powers of darkness.

Yet neither the people nor the cognoscenti, nor even the master himself, knew the origin of this light which blesses the just and the unjust alike. Though they all felt that a new canon of light had here been set up, while the older one lay shattered. Thus, even Christ seldom has a halo in Rembrandt; but there is always a holy light diffused above his Christians.

In proportion as these Biblical etchings become smaller and their lines more minute, the size of his Bible pictures in oil is increased and the brush strokes become more powerful and vigorous. The colors seem modeled; he paints with the blade of his palette knife, with the handle, and even with his fingers. People

have already begun to laugh and say that his figures could be dragged out of the picture by the nose. Since all this was meant to have its effect at a distance, the master said when anyone stepped too near that the odor of the colors was harmful. When another criticized the uneven manner in which the color was applied, he simply answered, "I am a painter, not a dyer."

When he paints now, Rembrandt prefers subjects which are lovely and quietly gripping. In the manger the shepherds pray to the child; in the attic the she-goat stands by the wife of Tobias; in a dreaming landscape Joseph lies in a dream; the horses of the Samaritan are quietly waiting and breathing before wooded hills. Thereupon his models again become strikingly ugly, as in his youth; and again he prefers old men, thirty or more of whom figure in his studies.

Then suddenly the inner picture changes with the outer one. In a morning gown the color of almond blossoms, Potiphar's wife is sitting on a red chair; with her large wicked hand, with the base finger of her right hand, she is pointing out to her turbaned husband that boy, Joseph, the profaner of their so-called marriage. The noble captain of the guard looks upon the scene skeptically: he knows his wife's proclivities, he sees how even now the partly undone garment is being held shut in her hand, how the large bed is tousled, and how the dreamy-eyed boy is protesting his innocence. It is obvious that her accusation is false; and it is just as certain that she is not Potiphar's wife, but Hendrickje, and the innocent Joseph is Titus. And thus once more we see these two, whose history is interwoven with that of Rembrandt, standing loyally before the easel as his servants.

He had now been living for seventeen years in the house in which he had once sought to immure his happiness. But he had not yet paid the half of the purchase price. The seller had been patient, not even demanding the interest; now he saw that the painter's market was steadily declining, and he himself was in difficulties. For the war with England had upset everything. No one had cash, not even the

wealthy. Government securities were bearing half interest, the plague had been rampant, 3,000 houses in Amsterdam were empty. The man pressed for payment.

So the old proprietor had Rembrandt van Rijn, the painter on the Breestraat, declared bankrupt. This happened near the time of his fiftieth birthday.

The house had to be sold, and Titus should merely become the "preferred creditor of his father." Soon there came a knock at the great house-door; and the official liquidator, whose name was none other than Torquinus, along with the notary and his officers, mounted the four steps to Rembrandt's happiness, and entered. For two full days at Christmas, every article which Rembrandt with his artistic taste had been assembling for more than twenty years, every item in this collection of beautiful and wonderful things to each of which a memory was attached, was taken down, felt, handled, named and appraised, while all these details were called out, for the clerk to copy.

Rembrandt stood by in silence. His heart was hardening against everyone connected with money. In his own need of funds, he went to the brother of the old nurse and tried to recover the amount which he had agreed to pay for her maintenance; and when the brother refused, just as he was planning to embark on his ship which was already in the harbor preparing for the voyage out, Rembrandt had him cast into the debtors' prison. This is how Rembrandt the impoverished creditor acted, now that he had felt how the rich acted towards him.

The moneyed men now began quarreling as to how much Titus should receive in advance, if any. The lawyers fought among themselves, each determined to gain preferment for his own client. For the collections alone had been appraised at 17,000 guilders.

The auction was now at hand. It was dark, cold and rainy November weather. Rembrandt stood before the high Venetian



His heart hardening against every one, Rembrandt, the impoverished artist--his beautiful and wonderful things--was taken down.

mirror which he no longer owned, and again painted his likeness, for no one could take that from him.

There he sits in a broad yellow robe, held by a red belt and bands interwoven with gold; he has donned a dark mantle only in order to pull this together. In his right hand he is holding a stick with a silver knob. The head shows age, yet the eye is vigilant. Rembrandt becomes the magician. At one time his brow had been furrowed by only two vertical grooves, worn there

by his habit of sharp scrutiny. Now they are crossed by horizontal lines drawn in by life. Thus, on the forehead of this fifty-year-old artist, the signs of genius and of fate now intermingle.

He sits with great stubbornness, intimidating in his calm—a king still on the throne which is to be taken from him the day following. Garments, stick and mirror are no longer his. But were he to sit like this tomorrow, no one would dare ask of him anything with which he was not likely to agree.



*creditor, stood by in silence while every
fess, handled, named, and appraised.*

He did agree, since they had all come now with carts to carry off to the Keizerskroon Inn in the Kalverstraat everything from Indian brocades to saucerpans. Then he arose from his throne and went forth in silence, followed by his wife and son. He slowly descended the four steps which were to have led to his happiness. He held out his hand to the other members of his family, who were going to live with acquaintances. The trustees assigned him a room in the same (Continued on page 207)



By *Rupert Hughes*

The Love Blood

BECAUSE his mother kept urging him to marry, Michael Crellin found the thought increasingly distasteful.

Because she pleaded with him to fall in love, he hated the very word.

Mrs. Crellin was a very great lady in New York and her one lone son was almost the equivalent of an eligible Prince of Wales. There was no difficulty in finding candidates for the post of daughter-in-law to the widow of Colonel Jacob Crellin, and she was able to submit to her heir apparent for his choice the most beautiful, the most wealthy, most aristocratic candidates. But his eye sickened of them before he saw them.

Failing to sell him an article of the first luster, she would now and then propose some poor girl of stalwart frame and good breeding. The health and the breed were vital, for what Mrs. Crellin wanted was grandchildren, great-grandchildren—immortality of that sort.

If she had let Michael alone, he would have fallen in love—and out of it, no doubt—and into matrimony—and out of it, perhaps more than once; for he was a likely lad, warm-hearted, warm-blooded and fonder of girls than the average.

But his mother's ardor froze him. She had been at him from his boyhood, emphasizing the importance of his preparation for the sacred privilege of parenthood.

Michael could not quite understand either his own resentment or his mother's enthusiasms until he went to college. There, in one of his scientific courses, he came to realize that his mother's zeal was biological. She was dreadfully consecrated to the continuance of the species. She came to represent to him the allegory of primeval, eternal, insatiable Femality.

She had certainly done her duty by the future. She bore her husband six children before he died.

He had first won her interest by his gorgeous uniform. It was the nature of the Crellins and of her own people, the Van Luyns, to be eminent in arms. On both sides there were ancestors in the Civil and the Mexican wars, the War of 1812, the Revolution and the Colonial wars.

Mrs. Crellin was a Daughter of nearly everything there was in American history to be a Daughter to, and she was delighted when her husband went to the Spanish-American War as a colonel, enabling her offspring to be Sons and Daughters of that, too. The colonel came home a bag of skin and bones, full of typhoid, but she nursed him back to life and the procreation of another daughter and a final son, this Michael, before he died.

About his bedside gathered his four sons and two daughters and the beginnings of what Mrs. Crellin hoped to be a large colony of grandchildren.

But children have a great versatility in dying and the Crellins were apt at it. By the time the World War came along, she had left only two of all her offspring. Michael was too young to volunteer, but his elder brother, Stuyvesant, was among the first to enlist.

He fought well and won decorations—more than one—one too many, indeed. He came home somber, almost morose. But he fell promptly in love with a sweet and innocent girl that his mother chose for him from an old and wealthy country family.

On the day before the wedding, and doubtless for the reason



Michael wanted to fall in love with someone in the parade, but be found eagerness to love fatal to love.

usual in such cases, he put a bullet through his heart. It seemed to go on through his mother's breast. She was all but dead for weeks. While she mourned for her beloved boy, she mourned mystically also that the world would never know a child of Stuyvesant's, or children of that child.

She came out of her mourning at last, but her heart was sick with terror of the annihilation of two families in her. She was the last of her glorious lineage as her husband had been the last of his. She heard the call of all antiquity to do her duty.

So Michael received the full weight of her mania, and by some perversity of disposition resolved that he would not be sold into slavery by his own mother. He would love whom he pleased and marry when—and if—he got good and ready.

He came to his maturity, too, at a time when the institution of matrimony seemed to be going to pieces anyway. Michael's generation had been questioning the whole business of wedlock with cynical frankness.

He finally resented his mother's eternal refrain: "My boy, when are you going to marry?"

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Story of a Rich Woman's Son of the CRELLINS

Illustrations by
Jules Gotlieb



Good Lord, Mother, what do children get you but torment, terror? Look what your poor heart has suffered!"

"Motherhood is woman's highest privilege. Children are the highest delight earth offers."

"When they're right, they're all right. But who's going to guarantee me against bringing defectives and criminals into the world? The world doesn't need my children, Mother. It doesn't need anybody's. There's always Everybody's."

His mother wrung her hands. "But don't you—can't you—won't you see the duty you owe to your family, your ancestors?"

"What difference does it make to my ancestors? And you know, Mother, that this genealogy business is the biggest bunk in the world."

"Michael, you dare!"

"You know how carefully you've selected your ancestors. We're no different from the rest. I'm just as full of thieves' blood as of any other. And if anybody should drive up and ask us about all the ladies of our line, what do we know? You tell me I am my father's son, and I believe you, but what about my two grandmothers, my four great-grandmothers and so on—who knows what my real name ought to be?"

She actually slapped at him, but he dodged and ran away laughing. His laughter seemed to ring down the corridors of time in deathless mockery.

As HE left the house and walked down Fifth Avenue he was overtaken by Beverly Stuyvesant, striding along like Diana with a brace of Russian boarhounds on leash.

He liked her. She looked stunning.

"Come along for a stroll," she said.

"If you'll shorten your stride to mine. Those long legs of yours are too much for me, Bev."

"What's biting you, Mike?"

"Oh, just the regular run-in with Mother. She wants me to marry."

"Well, why don't you?"

"Why don't you?"

"Nobody asks me any more."

"You're a decentish sort of gal, Bev, as women go nowadays. Would you marry me?"

"Sure! I'd try anything once. We can always quit."

"Children and all?"

"Anything but that. No children allowed in this apartment."

"Then it's all off. My mother must have grandchildren and she relies on me to get her a bunch. It's indecent somehow. Makes me feel obscene kind of, as if I were being offered about like a thoroughbred, foal guaranteed."

"Strikes me the same way. Sorry I can't oblige you, Mike. You're a nice boy. If you ever want to try just you and me, look me up. But there's a crowd, you know, and six or more—well, that's a reception."

"I understand. I'm right with you. But I'd never dare face Mother with a confirmed spinster for a wife."

He left her and straggled back home. He found his mother just finishing another of her long crying spells. She had wept so much and for such good reason during her long life that, while the world thought of her as a granite-hearted autocrat who had everything that anybody could want, her son knew her as a pitiful old woman who wanted babies and grandbabies and found only mockery in everything else.

It came over him that he had no right to end her life in tragedy just because he was too lazy or too selfish to do the normal thing, the inevitable thing, without waiting till she was in her grave.

He found her standing by the mantel in her room, leaning against it and crying over the array of babies' shoes that she kept there, a ghastly collection of maudlin keepsakes that he had implored her in vain to put out of sight. He went to her, dragged her back to a chair, sat in it and took her in his lap.

"I've been a yellow dog, Mama," he said, "but I've been thinking it over, and I've decided that you know best. Anyway I can deny you nothin', since you never denied me nothin'. I'm pretty well fed up on bachelorhood and getting about ready for a pair of slippers and something to dandle on the old knees."

His woful mother sat up, smiling like a child. He hugged her and rocked her and she was so happy that she began crying again.

"You poor little kid!" said Michael. "I'll get you a whole flock of dolls as soon as I can find a fair collaborator."

Mrs. Crellin was human in this also, that she could be frantic to have her way, only to be intensely confused by getting it. When Michael had been in his denying mood, she would have been glad to have him marry nearly anybody. As soon as he yielded, hardly anybody seemed good enough for her angel.

"You're a dear to promise me this, my boy. Only you mustn't rush into it. You must be careful not to fall in love with anybody who is unworthy of you. You couldn't endure a plebeian woman, or an ill-bred one, or one that wasn't handsome and ornamental and—one that you would take pride in."



C"You'll not be forgettin' Sue's a grand gerl, honest, hard-workin' and clane?" asked Mrs. Giluly.

"All right, darling. I'll keep my eyes open and unlock my heart. And you can start sewing on the baby clothes."

She hugged him so hard that she nearly broke one of his bent ears, but he did not cry out.

Now that she felt sure of him, she forbore to plague him. When she forbore to plague him, he ceased to cast about for a bride. He was busy at the office of the estate and he was fond of his clubs.

Mrs. Crellin had dropped out of the whirl of things of late. It came over her that a whole flock of new girls had grown up into the world and that Michael was apparently as unaware of them as she had been.

An inspiration came to her: instead of waiting for him to stumble upon some proper woman in his probably improper wanderings, why not bring a select array of women to him?

She dared not confess her scheme to him, but suddenly found an excuse for giving a big reception and ball. But he caught the canny look in her eye, and understood that this reception was to be a sort of Arabian Nights affair. He was to be the sultan's son before whom all the princesses were to be promenaded for his selection.

He sighed. He groaned. He was tempted to retrieve his promise, fall ill, jump off a dock, anything to escape so degrading a servitude. But he lacked the courage to recall that old look of defeat to his mother's face. She was ten years younger already.

Afterward that ball was spoken of as the most brilliant beauty parade ever witnessed in New York.

It was sensational to see the dull old Crellin mansion come to life again. It had been dull and dark for years. The house was imposing—so big and ostentatious and so confused in its periods, indeed, that art critics called it an imposition, a blot on Fifth Avenue, a blight on Central Park, which it seemed to usurp as its own front yard.

MR. CRELLIN was making ready to live up to her reputation tonight. She had overworked herself on the colossal festival, and fatigue inclined her to despair. She felt it in her bones that she was doomed to failure after all.

Her despondency and her anger at it combined to make her a figure of terror as she finished dressing.

She stood up at last looking an overdressed gorgon slightly out of style. She was garish in her precious stones. One of the jealous guests said that she looked like Broadway at Longacre Square on a foggy night.

Michael, looking in her room to help her down the marble steps, found her standing before the mantel, staring at the regiment of little shoes, shaking her head over them.

He tried to draw her away, saying: "You're late to your own reception, honey."

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"If I should, I'm sure she would remind me of it," said Michael.

But she seized him and pointed to the array of abandoned bootlets, reached forward and caressed them.

She was sobbing in his arms. "Oh my son, my son, aren't you ever going to give me children for my last lonely years? They're waiting somewhere out there—your children—waiting in the cold between the stars for you to give them their chance. Aren't you going to?"

He murmured: "All right, Mother, I'll do my duty. We'll look about tonight. Perhaps my Princess Charming will be in the gang—among the guests."

His mother hugged him and laid her wet cheek against his. She powdered her nose again, dried her eyes and put on her most formidable hospitable expression as if it were a mask.

They went down the steps. The tide came in through the great front door. She kept Michael by her. When there was a lull in the bargain-counter rush of shoppers, Mrs. Crellin would murmur to her son:

"There's that Miss What's-her-name. Beautiful, don't you think? Seems an awfully nice sort, too. You must talk to her a little."

"The girl that just passed—the one talking to Polly—Gladys—no, Gwen—Ethel Gray—very pretty—well-read, too—beautifully brought up. You can tell that. You might take her to supper. Sound her out."

"Who's that just coming in the door—wonderful, isn't she? Her name's on the tip of my tongue—rode in the last horse show. Be sure to dance with her, won't you?"

He said, "Yes, Mother," to everything. He was as meek as Miriam. He was determined to surrender.

There was something idiotic, irritating, intolerable about the whole affair to Michael. Such a way of accomplishing what ought to come about unconsciously in the moonlight on a beach!

The blind god Cupid had thrown off his bandage and played the auctioneer. No reasonable offer refused.

Michael wanted terribly to fall in love with someone in the parade, but he found eagerness to love fatal to love.

Before him, about him was beauty at its most beautiful. But the moment he thought of a Juno as a bride, she turned into a fish-wife.

It was loathsome fascinating to study some masterpiece of flesh in a masterpiece of fabric and imagine her in the intimacies of a honeymoon. If she passed that examination, he put her to the test of long rainy evenings alone in the country, or becalmed on a yacht.

One or two of them got by even that ordeal, but when he fancied them at breakfast on the third anniversary or nursing a squalling baby of his, he erased the vision in a hurry of repugnance.

And still the gorgeous tide rolled in. He was growing seasick. When one girl passed whom his mother especially emphasized, he made a cowardly excuse of taking her in to dance. Then he dodged her and joined the men in a secluded room where those whose main night work was getting drunk were already busy.

ONE privilege the great have that ought to make greatness almost endurable. They may sometimes do as they please without fear of criticism from their superiors. They have no superiors.

So Michael, finding himself increasingly tempted to bolt, finally bolted. If anybody objected to attending a hostless party, let him object.

Michael sneaked down the basement steps, slipped through the tradesmen's door, made his way up the steps to the sidewalk, and felt like a convict on the right side of the penitentiary walls.

The night was warm and dark, without stars or moon. It would probably rain tomorrow.

Across the Avenue were the tree-lined low walls of Central Park. Its lonely dignity beckoned Michael to come on over. He crossed the street, found an entrance and walked a gloomy path in the radiant sufficiency of being a free man.

It was a little cool out here. He turned up his collar and drew his coat together as best he could over his glowing shirt-front and moved warily along the almost hidden footpath, pausing now and then to revel in liberty and the franchise of solitude.

In the depths of one well of gloom, he felt an all but imperceptible agitation in the air, as if someone were panting heavily. But no one was running. No one was even visible. Yet the strange huh-huh-huh-huh went on, in a kind of mockery of laughter, smothered yet irrepressible.

He understood at last.

It was a woman crying. He stared into the dark and could see nobody. The muffled grief came from the ground. He bent and peered and slowly made out a shaken figure. As he stared he could barely perceive that a girl was huddled along the black grass and sobbing her heart out.

His chief religion in life was an intense passion for minding his own business. But the sympathetic vibration of that lone sufferer shook his heart. In utter (Continued on page 201)



The Private Life of a FAMOUS ENCHANTRESS

ODYSSEUS understood that Circe was a dangerous woman. One more peril for him to get by, on the way home.

It seemed a bit hard, after the lotus-eaters, and the Cyclops, and what not. Would fate never let up on him?

So he stopped off on her island, to see how dangerous she was.

The landscape wasn't hospitable. A thick wood came down to the shore, a forest of pines and other dark green trees which made twilight all day, and suggested fear. One solid roof of boughs, one interminable carpet of scented needles, but no sign of a house, or castle, or whatever she lived in.

Odysseus kept prudently to the coast till he found a hill, a respectable rock. Perhaps from the top of it he might see where the estate lay—by a lake, or in a clearing . . . No, nothing but trees. He wondered if it was the wrong island. Even if it was the right one, Penelope, he remembered, had been waiting a long time . . . Ah yes, there it was, toward the north—a thin thread of blue smoke, straight up out of the forest in the quiet air. That's where the danger was. And supper cooking. He fixed the direction in his mind, and climbed down.

The walk through the wood was too silent to be pleasant. He wished the ground were not covered with needles—he would have felt more natural if he could have heard his own footsteps. There were no birds—always a bad sign. Once he did hear a rustle—

over to the left a tall stag with magnificent antlers was looking at him. He looked back. Neither moved. He gave a sudden shout. The animal, unstartled, stared a second or two more, and walked away from him, very leisurely. He mopped his forehead and went on. The noise he had made unnerved him.

Half a mile farther he was suddenly aware of a large dog, just where he must pass, unless he changed his direction ignominiously. The beast was lying at full length with its nose in the pine carpet, and he noticed with regret that its eye was on him. He shook his sword loose, to be ready, and pushed on; motionless otherwise, the dog followed with that cold stare. Of course, when he had got well by, he had a sense that the thing might jump at him from behind. To make sure, he looked back. The dog was still watching. Odysseus walked a bit faster.

He had barely done another half-mile when he saw a man coming toward him, a tall young man, in great haste. As he drew near, Odysseus noted the soft mustache on his lip—yes, a very young man indeed, but unusually tall, and armed with an unnecessarily wicked sword. But the young man was less observing than the dog, didn't even glance at him, in fact was about to walk him down as though he hadn't been there.

"I beg your pardon," said Odysseus. "Really, you ought to beg mine, but we needn't stickle over it."

The young man stopped, annoyed. "You're going the wrong way."

"Isn't this the way to Circe's house?"

"It is. That's what I meant." The young man was moving on. "See here, friend, you don't mean anything sinister, do you? Is she dangerous?"

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Circe Higher



and the Life

By John Erskine

Illustrations by Mac Harshberger

"As you may have noticed," said the young man, "I'm leaving the neighborhood. It's been postponed for a year. Would you mind stepping out of the way? Conversation was never so untimely. I'm late."

"Sorry to detain you," said the hero, "but I'd like your advice. I was thinking of calling on Circe. Of course I don't have to."

"The one before me didn't have to, either," said the young man. "Poor fellow!"

"Wait a minute! What does she do?"

"She tames you. A few days in this place, and you'll lose your ambition. I'm leaving."

"The animals don't seem tame," said Odysseus.

"Man, they're too lazy to stand up!"

"Do you know," said the hero, "the stag and the dog upset me? They suggested incantations, and transformings, and that sort of thing."

THE young man looked at him sharply.

"Well, perhaps you've met some of the human ones." "There now," said Odysseus, "I was afraid of it! She does throw a spell on you!"

"If you're really going to risk it, there's just one sure precaution. Here!" He went quickly to a mound in the pine carpet where a whitish growth, funguslike, showed itself. "Here! Crush this in your hands, and when she offers you food, sprinkle it over the dish. That will do the trick."

Odysseus gathered a handful of the sovereign remedy, and tried to crush it. Evidently this specimen wasn't dry enough.

He looked about for more—and then he realized that the young man had disappeared. Uncanny, that . . . And the dog was gone too . . . Perhaps they hadn't really been there . . . Odysseus walked on, nervous, but rather glad the peril was so promising. In his hand he still clutched the white growth.

Her house wasn't so magnificent as he had expected; a sorceress, you'd think, would live either in a cave, or in a hut, or in a fairy palace. Circe had just a house. A fair garden outside—nothing startling; a few vines up the southern wall and over the porch—he couldn't be sure whether it was honeysuckle or wisteria; modest curtains in the windows.

He wondered whether you knocked, or whether she foretold your arrival and came out to meet you. Someone was singing—not a bad voice. He walked cautiously to the nearest window and peeked in. There she was, seated at a table—he wasn't sure at first, but he thought she was—yes, she was doing a small piece of embroidery. Not what you'd expect of an enchantress. He wondered if he had stopped at the wrong house. If his eyes didn't deceive him, she was extremely young, tall, beautiful.

It was the right house. At her feet lay two immense hounds, sleeping. More of her enchanted lovers, perhaps. Not very alert as watch-dogs, he must say . . . He was so lost in the vision and the thoughts that he bumped his forehead against the window, and Circe looked up. He suspected that she wasn't pleased

Circe and the Higher Life

to see a strange man peering in. She must have given a signal for the hounds woke suddenly and had their eyes on him too . . . Embarrassing, but the best strategy, he recalled, is frankness. He stepped around to the front door.

Before he knocked, Circe had it open. She stood just behind the threshold, a hound on each side. He smiled with delight, and she frowned back at him—but he couldn't help the smile at sight of such unusual beauty. Tall, indeed, and pantherlike, he thought; if her favorite trick was to turn her lovers into animals, could it be that she was a creature of the wilderness, disguising for a while in a woman's body?

TAWN-Y-COLORED, slow and lazy-seeming, guarding herself with her eyes—he saw a strong resemblance to the cat family, but didn't admit it to himself, since the charm of cats is an unheroic peril. A serpentine fascination would be better, but—he glanced at the single yet rich robe which depended casually from her shoulders and covered her bosom intimately—no, these fancies were wide of the mark. She was primarily woman.

An angry woman, for the moment. "You must be proud of yourself!"

"Not particularly, Madam. I was looking for Circe's house, and—"

"Well, you can't find it through the window. You're the first tramp that's gone through here in several months, and I'll say you're no credit to the profession. The honest ones try the front door first."

"I'm no tramp."

"Ah—then a pilgrim, perhaps? A disreputable fellow last year, no worse than you, gave the excuse that he was a pilgrim."

"Madam, I'm only an unfortunate man, trying to get home."

Circe shook her head slowly. "I never heard that before. Why did they send you away?"

Odysseus was annoyed. It wouldn't do to assert himself, not to this woman, not yet, but if he didn't explain his situation his visit would be well, in the wrong key.

"I left of my own will, Madam, to help cut a friend. His wife had run away."

"They will, from time to time," said Circe. "What comfort did you prescribe?"

"I helped him to catch her again."

"When you peeked through the window," she said, "I knew you had a mean spirit."

Odysseus did the frowning this time, very spontaneously.

"Madam, my story is widely known. It is not my habit to boast."

"Don't," she said. "Save your wits till you get home. Who's been feeding the pigs while you were gone?"

"Pigs, Madam?"

"I keep them myself," said Circe, "but the boy who takes care of them has just left. If you want to make yourself useful—"

"Madam," said Odysseus, "at home I am a king."

Circe laughed, a very haunting, soft, husky kind of laugh.

"None of the others," she said, "had so nimble a tongue, but essentially you're all alike. What you're after is food. I suppose I'll have to get you something. Sit down out here. The dogs will watch you."

What he was about to say would not have been polite, but before he could clear his throat she had disappeared, and it was no use wasting words on the hounds. He sat down . . . Besides, if he lost his temper, she would have him at a disadvantage. His fate depended on the food. If he didn't accept it, she might set the animals on him, and if he did, he might find himself turned into a third guardian of the house, furry and four-footed. Or perhaps she'd send him out to be another sentinel in the forest, lying with his nose in the pine carpet. Not that he really believed those stories about her, but it was silly to take a risk. He still had that white plant clutched in his hand, sticky and damp. Providential, you might say.

She came out with some cold things on a plate.

"Madam," he said, "I never should have found your dwelling if I hadn't observed smoke from your chimney. At least, I thought it was smoke."

She was dusting off her hands as though the touch of the plate had contaminated them.

"Your eyesight is excellent. It was smoke."

SHE was smiling a little. The two hounds stole up to the food, sniffed at it and drew back, more than satisfied.

"I don't like to mention it," he began, "because you might think I didn't appreciate your hospitality, but—"

"They all prefer the warm food," she said. "I knew you were going to complain. You'll eat up the cold things first, or you'll starve. Afterwards—we'll see."

"See what, Madam?"

"The pigs come next. If you show decent gratitude for this perfectly adequate meal, you can clean out the sty. If you do it thoroughly, I'll furnish soap and hot water, and you can wash up. If you then are presentable, I'll invite you to supper."

Odysseus studied the plate and considered.

"Take it or leave it!"

He unfolded from his fist the crushed plant, and tried to spread it out, to cover all the meat.

"What's that?"

"Madam, that is seasoning."

"It doesn't need any! You haven't tasted it yet."

He raised the seasoned food to his lips. Really, the plant was most unpleasant.

"That stuff is green," she said. "You must have found it near."

Odysseus saw an opportunity for discretion.

"It was, I might say, revealed to me, Madam. I was already conscious of needing it, but probably should have passed it by if a sudden stranger, a god-like young man, had not appeared and put it in my hands."

"Godlike?"

"Madam, I'm not religious in the narrow sense, but anyone with wide experience knows that Providence may operate through what we should ordinarily call a human form."

"You think you met a god, and he gave you that nasty thing to eat?"

"Madam, I beg of you—"

"Was the god rather young?"

"Decidedly."

"A slight mustache?"

"Very slight."

"Well," she said, "the god was hard up, if he couldn't find a better form than that one . . . If you're through, I'll take the plate and you can get at the pigs."

Odysseus wiped his lips on the back of his hand and stood up.

"If I hadn't reason to be thankful for



A pleasant thrill went through Odysseus at sight of that neglected bull.

that casual meeting, I shouldn't venture to disagree with you, but I insist the young man was providential."

"We won't quarrel over an adjective," said Circe. "I thought he was lazy. Perhaps it's the same thing. I had to discharge him just after luncheon."

"He didn't mention that, but he said something or other was postponed for a year."

"I like his impudence!"

"The reference escaped me," said Odysseus. "I thought perhaps he meant—"

"I broke with him completely, and he thinks he'll get another chance. Lazy rascal!"

"Didn't he keep the sty clean?"

"He did not—but it wasn't entirely that." A meditative expression overspread her eyes, but she roused herself. "Go round to the back of the house. There's a shovel, a hoe and a broom. In an hour I'll see whether you deserve the soap and water."

The number of the pigs was seven. Why so many, he couldn't guess. They were friendly creatures with caressing voices, four bass and three verging on baritone. They greeted him like an old friend in fact, got in his way. The condition of the sty was deplorable. He leaned on the hoe and wondered if the adventure was worth the trouble.

"Unless you begin soon," said Circe, "you'll get no breakfast."

The seven pigs stood in a row and watched him begin. He thought they were smiling.

WHEN he was ready for supper at last, he detected a more cordial manner in his hostess. The soap had made his forehead shine handsomely, and his beard, once the dust was washed out of it, resumed its distinguished curl. He was pleased to note that she had changed her working-dress for a fabric finer and more subtle. The woman had a social gift—he could tell it from the way the table was set.

"This is very pleasant, Madam, after the hardships of travel."

"Does it remind you of home?" said Circe. "That's the formula I hear most often."

"Ah, Madam—home! Don't mention it."

"Why not?"

"It wrings my heart. My infant son—my lonely wife—"

"Will you have some more soup?" said Circe. "Or shall I bring in the meat?"

Odysseus sat up very straight. "I was speaking of my wife and child."

"Then you won't have more soup?"

He wanted some, but preferred not to surrender.

"Well, if you don't mind, I'll have some more," she said. "It's the best part of the meal."

He watched her while she ate it.

"My wife," he said, "is in a very difficult position."

Circe removed the soup plates and retired to the kitchen. The dogs kept their eyes on him till she returned. Perhaps—he flushed at the idea—perhaps they were trained to protect the silver.

"How do you like the meat cooked?" she asked, bringing it in. "Well done, thank you."



Circe proved an extraordinary wife. She complimented Odysseus on his thoroughness in tending the pigs.

"Why do men always like it that way? I like it red. Will you carve?"

He carved. It was red. In Ithaca he would have called it raw. Conscious of his duty as a guest, he tried to eat a small piece.

"She has been waiting for me for several years," he went on, "and unless some of my friends have notified her, she doesn't know whether I'm dead or alive. I call that hard."

"Do you care for salad?"

He meant to look at her sharply, but she was caressing one of the dogs, and didn't see.

"Do you?"

"As a matter of fact, I do, but it's not important."

"Exactly the way I feel about it. You can pick some in the morning, and we'll have it for lunch. Unless you're leaving after breakfast."

"I'm not sure yet how soon I shall leave."

She raised her eyebrows. "In any case, I suppose the table may as well be cleared."

He made no move to help her. "My various departures," he said, "have always depended on—"

She wasn't listening to him. She didn't ask him to continue his remarks. He coughed to encourage himself.

"—on a favorable wind."

"You are original, aren't you? Now, will you wash the dishes and I wipe them, or the other way around?"

"At home," said Odysseus, "my wife tends to all that."

"When you've got them washed," said Circe, "you'll find a towel over the sink." Not another sound from her till the last dish was put away. She was busy with her embroidery.

He helped himself to a seat across the room.

"My son must be quite a man by this time. It's an extraordinary fate, when you think of it, to leave your son an infant and find him a grown man, perhaps impossible for you to recognize. As a child, he was unusually handsome."

She turned the embroidery upside (Continued on page 155)

My Adventures With the Opera Pirates

Dorothy Speare here reveals the *Corrupt System* Which Young American Students Face

I CLIMBED up five flights of cold stone steps and walked through a freezing stone corridor lined with doors hewn dolorously out of the walls. This heatless tenement looked like a medieval monastery. It sheltered members of a profession that is still medieval, although far from monastic.

The word medieval seems as romantic to the historically uninformed as the word opera-singer sounds to the musically uninformed.

My climb up the five stone flights of this Milan tenement was my first definite move in flinging aside the pageantry of what it is to be an opera-singer. As I halted before one of the dolorous doors, I was on the threshold of my discovery that the real history of an operatic career is much like that of the Dark Ages. Black, troublous times, dominated by ignorance and cruelty.

Although after years of study abroad I was ready for my débüt, I had no more idea of the life that was awaiting me than had my friends at home. The only people who know the truth about the operatic career will not tell it. It remains shrouded in mystery, almost as if there were a tacit conspiracy surrounding it.

The successful singers will not tell because the truth would take from their prestige, from the glamor that always must surround them. And who would believe the account of a singer who had not succeeded? There is a very natural distrust of alibis and sour-grapish cynisms.

The only others who know the truth will never tell it because they are the ones who have made the conditions what they are and profit by so doing. These people are under various groups and classes which I shall take up later. We must come upon them gradually, as I came upon them gradually in the turbulent launching of my career.

At the moment when I knocked upon the stone door, that January morning in Milan, I had come upon nothing. I was ecstatically thrilled with the adventure of arriving all alone in Milan, the operatic center of the world, to make the débüt towards which I had been working for so long.

The door that marked the beginning of my professional career was pushed open by a pallid little Italian, who bade me "accommodate myself." The room looked very accommodating. There was a shabby upright piano by the window, buried under opera scores. At the piano sat a handsome youth with smoldering black orbs. Between the piano and the opposite wall of the room was wedged a double bed with a tenanted cradle beside it.

In a third of the near-together corners a copiously formed woman hovered between an odorous stove and a table set for an unlimited number of people. In the last corner in front of the closet, sat the grandmother of the family, La Nonna, watching the seething activity of her domicile with bright cavernous eyes.

"Are you Maestro Villetta?" The pallid one nodded. "They gave me your name at the Carcano Theater. I have an audition there in an hour."

The maestro—a title bestowed indiscriminately in Italy upon orchestra conductors, professors of singing and hack accompanists—stretched out a weary hand for my opera score. "We'd better rehearse now," he said, and marched to the piano. The youth with the smoldering orbs got up to make room for me, remarking in passing that he had an audition too.

"I have made thirty-five in the last two weeks," he added, not without a certain pride.

I stared at him blankly, forgetting my own perturbation for a moment. "Thirty-five auditions in two weeks!"

There came a cackle from La Nonna in the corner. "The Signorina is new in art?"

"In art," in Italian, paradoxically enough, means on the stage. Nothing could have been much newer in art than I, but I had been warned that it would be fatal to admit the truth. I now saw that my warners had been right.

"I am new to Milan," I responded slowly. "I have been on the stage in France."

It was marvelous how the room lightened. La Nonna ceased cackling; the maestro's wife, who had temporarily suspended operations, turned again to the stove; the smoldering youth relaxed, regarded me with a comradely appraisal.

Even the maestro, who was now at the piano, changed the expression of his back.

"I suppose you'll do the Mad Scene," he said, indicating my score of "Lucia." "Andiamo!"

It was an awful ordeal, singing for those experts in that crowded little room. When I finished, La Nonna began to criticize my phrasing and the youth of thirty-five auditions began to tell about the last theater in which he had sung. It was at Padua, he related; he had sung the father in "Traviata," and had stopped the show. I listened peevishly. I did not find him as handsome as I had at first.

Already I was developing the singer's psychology, which is completely egocentric, expecting the world to revolve about the singer. Here nobody had given me a word of praise, and I had to sit and listen to another singer revolve the world about himself! Finally I asked some searching questions and discovered that his wow at Padua had taken place a year ago, since which time he had been "at liberty," specializing in auditions.

IN TURN he asked me some searching questions and discovered that after a season's study in Rome I had come to Milan to throw myself into the operatic mart, with my only asset a letter from my teacher to Oreste Poli, a Milan impresario who owned three theaters there.

He began to laugh heartily. "So you think you will get a débüt by means of a letter!"

I looked at him in growing discomfort. This was not my first misgiving. Most people think it should be easy to get a débüt in Italy, where every small town has its opera season and a city like Milan boasts of three opera-houses besides intermittent freelance seasons of opera at various other theaters. I knew it wasn't easy.

I knew of the Italian prejudice against foreigners, particularly Americans, singing in their theaters. But I did not realize how bitter the prejudice was, how deep-rooted and, at times, how violent.

This prejudice is founded on the natural instinct of self-preservation. Italian singers are being forced to the wall. There are four thousand Americans and hundreds of other foreigners studying for opera in Milan. Rome, Florence, Palermo, and many additional cities in Italy also have their quota.

The Italian producers and agents were not slow to take advantage of this wholesale flocking. If the Italian theater was to be used as a training-school for foreigners, the foreigners would have to pay for the privilege. And so started the remarkable commerce of buying operatic appearances, at prices that vary according to the personal prosperity of the aspirant.

Yes, in Rome I had heard a few baleful rumors about this traffic in singers, but I was sure that good honest merit was going to win out single-handed. I had learned the Italian language as few foreigners took the time and trouble to learn it; I had studied and slaved away at their operas, (Continued on page 212)



Dorothy Speare

A Cavalier of the



A Novel
based on the
Romance
of ANDREW
JACKSON

The Story So Far:

DESPITE his hot temper, no one was more popular than Andrew Jackson in the frontier settlement of Nashville, on the Cumberland, at the close of the eighteenth century. Among his friends were John Overton, an attorney, a mysterious Englishman who called himself Fowler (in reality a Lord Melderode seeking forgetfulness from an unhappy marriage), and the Donelson family.

Though he concealed his passion, Jackson was madly in love with Rachel Robards, the married daughter of Mrs. Donelson. Captain Robards was a brute, treated his wife abominably and finally abandoned her. When word came that he had procured a divorce, the ardent Jackson immediately married Rachel. But it developed that Robards had not obtained his divorce legally until after the ceremony. Enraged by what he considered the calculated deviltry of Robards, Jackson insisted upon a second wedding.

With the bond doubly sealed, the Jacksons lived happily in their fine home built on Hunter's Hill, and Andrew, adoring Rachel, was content. But public life claimed him. His lovers' paradise was disrupted when Andrew was elected representative from Tennessee to the seat of Federal Government, then in Philadelphia. Meeting all the notables there did not lessen Jackson's homesickness. Nor did the blandishments of a certain Lady Melderode make up for the absence of Rachel.

Hating life at the capital, Jackson asked for leave of absence from Congress. To David Allison, a merchant, he had sold some of his Tennessee land, accepting notes in payment. Using these, Jackson bought a stock of goods and returning home opened a store. Now he would give Rachel all that her heart desired!

But Allison failed in business. Jackson had to meet his financial obligations and was ruined. Even his Hunter's Hill home had to be sold. Still, he was not beaten, and Rachel buoyed him up with hope and love. They built another home, "The Hermitage," and Jackson was elected to the Supreme Court of Tennessee. But when he ran for major-general of the militia against General Sevier and won, he aroused the fury of the famous veteran.

Meantime, Colonel Burr and Lady Melderode were on their way to Nashville, floating down the Ohio. Dreams of empire occupied him. She sought adventure under the guise of looking for a lost husband.

"At Nashville we must be quite surprised when we meet," cautioned Burr.

"We shall be amazed by our meeting!" she promised.

A SLAVE returning to the Hermitage from an errand in Nashville brought a note from John Overton announcing Colonel Burr's arrival and demanding Jackson's presence in town forthwith.

"The colonel is paying Tennessee a great honor," said Jackson as he repeated the message to Rachel. "He was very courteous to me in Philadelphia and the least we can do is to entertain him in our house."

"Of course, my dear! Any friend of yours is welcome." She at once gave orders for the guest-room to be made ready. It meant much less to her that Burr had held high place in the nation than that he had been kind to her husband. Her finest bed linen was brought from its cedar chest and with her own hands she redressed the high four-poster in the guest chamber.

The proximity of Burr, a friendly man with brains in his head, who had not only helped to win statehood for Tennessee but was one of the few Easterners to recognize the needs of the frontier, greatly stirred Jackson.

"He must meet as many of our people as possible!" he said. "If they think in the East that Burr's no longer a factor in public affairs they're mistaken! We want to make friends with him and rouse his interest in our state."

He scrubbed himself and shaved and demanded her assistance in the choice of a shirt. He had got into his best breeches and was watching Rachel tighten a button on his coat when he detected in her face a look that awakened a suspicion that she did not fully share his gratification at Colonel Burr's proximity.

"He's one of our great men!" he declared. "I wouldn't want him to think we didn't appreciate what he did for Tennessee when we needed friends!"

"He killed General Hamilton," remarked Rachel.

"Fairly, in a duel!" Jackson caught her up. "Hamilton had heaped every indignity upon him; Burr had to assert himself! No self-respecting man can allow his honor to be trampled upon. It was Hamilton who kept Burr from the Presidency."

"If he's your friend that's enough, my dearest," Rachel replied, handing him the coat. "You may be sure I'll do my best to make Colonel Burr's visit pleasant."

"I bid
come, C
Burr," said

Illus

the Cumberland

*By Meredith
Nicholson*



"I bid you welcome, Colonel Burr," said Rachel.

"I can always count upon you, my dear one! They call you the most gracious hostess in Tennessee!" A white horse, the handsomest in the Hermitage stables, was carefully groomed, its hoofs polished like ivory, and it followed Jackson as he rode into town.

Nashville was astir; flags fluttered in the soft May breeze in honor of the visiting statesman. Messengers had borne the news of his arrival far through the valley and mid-afternoon found a large crowd assembled about the tavern where the colonel was established. Overton had taken the initiative and ordered a feast prepared.

In the common room of the tavern Burr, affably conversing with the citizens, saw Jackson enter and advanced toward him with both hands extended.

"My dear Jackson! What a pleasure to see you on your own soil! My coming here is due solely to you!—the fine things you told me of your state and its people. And I find them no exaggeration. I was never received so cordially anywhere."

"That's as it should be, Colonel Burr! If I'd known of your coming I should have met you at the Ohio with an appropriate escort. I now beg that you will do me the honor to be my guest. Mrs. Jackson joins me in a hearty invitation to make our house your home as long as you remain here."

"Thank you, sir! It will give me the greatest pleasure, my dear Jackson. But first I must break bread with these good citizens! The kindness of your friend Overton has made him seem already quite like an old friend."

It was not lost upon the onlookers, listening admiringly during this colloquy, that Burr held their former senator in high esteem. They had never been so proud of Jackson as now. His manners and speech lost nothing in comparison with those of the renowned statesman from over the mountains. The banquet was the best Nashville could provide and the participants overflowed the tavern dining-room into the common room, where the speakers at the main table were audible as they toasted the guest of honor. The colonel beamed his appreciation. A pleasant affair indeed, and a fine expression of pioneer hospitality!

Illustrations by Joseph M. Clement

A Chevalier of the Cumberland

Jackson's brief address of welcome laid emphasis upon the importance of the colonel's visit, which would give him a better understanding of western needs and of the imperative necessity for preparing to defend the western waterways from foreign encroachment. If Spain insisted on war the dons would be accommodated! The guest of honor smiled his approval of the militant spirit of the Tennesseans as they cheered these utterances of their major-general of the militia, a fighting man to his finger-tips.

FOGLER, an inconspicuous member of the company, alone wondered what had inspired Colonel Burr's journey. With his wider knowledge of the world he was not disposed to take this man at face value. As his career in the East was ended by the bullet that killed Hamilton, there was reason to suspect that some motive other than the national welfare had prompted this excursion into the west.

Amid cheers Burr retired to pack his belongings preparatory to his removal to the Hermitage, and Jackson added a toast to the many that had been given, expressing the good will of the

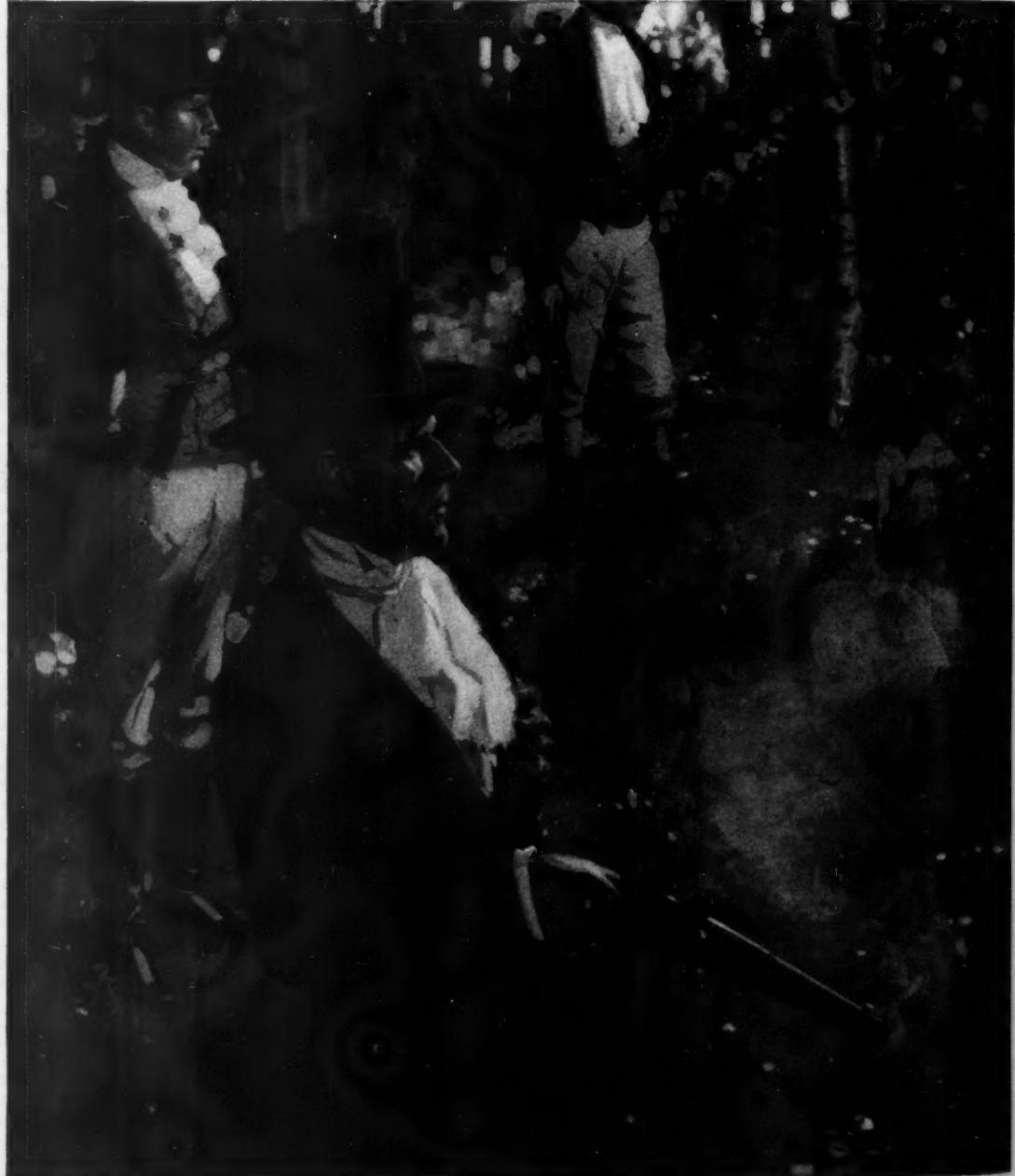
people of the Cumberland toward the distinguished guest. The crowd dispersed and in the street outside Jackson waited with his horses for Burr to appear.

"I'm glad you joined us," he remarked to Fowler. "This is the first opportunity we've had to entertain a man of such prominence in the nation. I think Colonel Burr is favorably impressed with our country and its people."

"Apparently—yes," Fowler replied rather coldly. "But do we really know why he's making this tour? If I were you I'd be a little wary of his confidences. He bears all the outward marks of a gentleman and he's plausible enough; but we don't know his purposes."

"He's a patriotic citizen!" Jackson retorted with asperity. "I hope you're not prejudiced against him on account of the Hamilton affair. Their difficulties had to be settled on the field of honor. It was Burr's good or bad fortune to kill Hamilton. In Burr Tennessee and the west had a friend and I'm not for turning my back on him now."

"The matter is of no importance to me," remarked Fowler



C "Have I missed him!" gasped Dickinson. Jackson, his left arm supporting his

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with a smile. "If I were you I would listen to anything Colonel Burr has to say, but I'd be cautious in committing myself. He's been thwarted in his highest aims and there's nothing further for him in American politics. He probably is looking for some new outlet for his energies. Our foreign relations are full of danger and some such man as Burr might easily take advantage of the situation to lead a movement on our southern coast that would threaten the existence of this Republic."

"You do the man an injustice," declared Jackson hotly. "He's no traitor!"

It had been in his mind to ask Fowler to the Hermitage during Burr's visit, but it occurred to him on second thought that danger lay in promoting the acquaintance of the two. He had seen Burr in Lady Melderode's house in Philadelphia and Burr might in some perfectly natural way refer to her ladyship and disturb the exile's peace. Fowler's disapproval of the colonel was a relief, for he now had an excuse for not including him among the men he expected to invite to the Hermitage to dine with the guest. And Burr, with his keen intelligence, could not fail to note

that Fowler was no ordinary immigrant, throwing in his fortunes with the Tennessee pioneers, but was of a different order, speaking not as they spoke and bearing marks of superior breeding and education impossible to disguise.

Fowler walked away as Burr emerged from the tavern, pausing to shake hands with the lingering banqueters. He had made the most favorable impression upon the men of the Cumberland by his agreeable manners. They pronounced him a good fellow; it was an outrage that the lack of one vote had defeated him for the Presidency. They gave a hearty cheer as he mounted the superb horse Jackson had brought for him and rode away to the Hermitage.

RACHEL, a housewife of the Virginia tradition, awaited the colonel in her best silk gown.

"I bid you welcome, Colonel Burr. It is a great pleasure to see you in our home," she said with a sweeping curtsey, to which he bowed deeply before advancing to take her hand.

"I am greatly honored, Mrs. Jackson. Your kindness in receiving me is beyond my deserving."

"Tennessee knows you for a friend, sir. My husband has talked much of his meetings with you in Philadelphia. I am glad of the chance to thank you for your kindness to him."

"Mr. Jackson left us far too soon! But I hardly blame him for turning his back upon the Congress. To a man of his strong common sense the dallying with public business is bound to be irksome. And now that I see his home—" A graceful gesture expressed his perfect realization that the home and its mistress had outweighed the allurements of public life.

As the gentlemen had so lately dined they went for a stroll about the grounds with Rachel accompanying them. The colonel manifested the greatest interest in plantation life, and pronounced the country the most beautiful in all America. The fortitude and courage of the pioneers challenged his admiration; never had there been so sturdy a race as was represented along these great western water-courses. The simple sincerity of the people he had met on his journey had greatly touched him.

"You will pardon me, Mrs. Jackson, but unless I am mistaken your father was the great John Donelson—truly a great man and one of the builders of the nation. I read the story of the voyage of the Adventurer several years ago in an English book of daring deeds. I take it that you are the brave daughter who accompanied him? Madam, again I salute you!"

He lifted his hat reverently. Rachel, pleased always by any reference to her father, murmured her appreciation, not suspecting that the colonel had posted himself as to the history of the Cumberland folk by inquiries in the settlements along the Ohio.

Colonel Burr proved to be the most delightful of guests. His host filled the days with interesting experiences. These included attendance at a session of the court where Burr, honored with a seat on the bench, expressed his approval of the manner in which justice was administered. He inspected the Nashville (Continued on page 190)



breast, took deliberate aim and fired. Dickinson's head sank and he fell.

By Royal Brown

Money or



C"We are regular Siamese twins, aren't we?" breathed Sally. "It's perfectly uncanny."

EXCUSE for what Eileen did there may be none; save, perhaps, that excitement is the cream of life, especially when one is but twenty-two. And Eileen, whose years numbered no more, lapped it up with all youth's healthy appetite.

She was fashioned to achieve her full share of it, too, being equipped with a charming, if slightly tilted nose, a lovely adventurous mouth, and in the wide and collected depths of her eyes a challenge to all so-called lords of creation—the unconscious, yet definite challenge of a flame to all moths.

Especially those sinister moths that are to be found in that part of downtown Chicago which is known as the Loop because elevated tracks encircle it.

"Loop-hounds," was Eileen's generic classification of these, and to deal with them she was equipped too—without appealing to a policeman, either.

But Jimmy Sturgis was not that sort of moth. Eileen knew that from the first, for all that his method was much the same as theirs.

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They met as informally as Adam and Eve did—with no more introduction, that is—of a November morning as Eileen walked to work. A brisk, bright November morning with just enough nip to the air to give life a quickened zest.

A closed car, which suggested a private one but which, as she afterwards discovered, was not, crept to a standstill at the curb just ahead of her.

"Ride?" Jimmy grinned at her, his engaging head stuck out.

Eileen surveyed him with eyes that dripped disdain. "No, thanks," she assured him coldly. But added, unnecessarily, "I'm walking for my health."

"I'd like to drive you—for mine," he persisted cheekily.

A pick-up, absolutely. But what price conventions anyway?

Formal introductions do not prevent undesirables from being added to a girl's acquaintance; why, therefore, ignore the surer promptings of instinct?

It had been Jimmy's eyes that had decided her to ride with him. They were such unmistakably nice eyes—if audacious.

Nevertheless, it wasn't anything so thrilling as love at first sight on either side. It was just youth seeking excitement; the promise of color and movement and adventure. Taking a chance, perhaps—but why not?

That had been the beginning and, so far as Eileen was concerned, it was to be the ending, too. Eileen knew what she wanted of life and Jimmy didn't fit into that picture. The car he drove was his own and could be hired by the hour, the day or the week. So he had told her. A shrewd youngster who knew his way about, she guessed, for all that he, like her—and so many Chicagoans—was a small-town product.

From Ohio, he had confessed as with careless skill he maneuvered his way through the Loop as if he had been reared in that madhouse of traffic.

"I've watched you every morning for weeks," he added impetuously, as he set her down before the office-building in which she worked. "I—will you ride again sometime?"

At the moment she hedged. But of course she rode again lots of times. Especially evenings when he was free and they took swift, soaring trips along the North Shore where the great estates lie either side of the road.

"I'm going to have one of those myself, one of these days," he assured her purposefully.

That was in December when Jimmy was beginning to display certain well-known symptoms. But Eileen still kept herself well in hand.

Nice—but full of hop, like most men. Such was her mental reservation. All men talked big that way. Jimmy's vision was of a fleet of cars of his own. That sort of stuff—as if Chi wasn't so full of taxis now that you couldn't move without taking a chance of getting run over!

This she didn't tell him then, however. They didn't know each other well enough as yet for the brutal frankness that develops later.

And he was a perfectly good boy friend—so far. The only trouble with him was the common masculine one. At Christmas he gave her a wrist watch which must have set him back a plenty and which she told him she couldn't possibly accept—but finally did. After that he began to act as if he owned her. And she didn't belong to him or any other man, thank the Lord. She wanted something more out of life than a three-room flat—even with him.

The time came—in late January—when she told him so.

"Not a lot of money, necessarily—though I wouldn't pass up a chance at a million."

"Yeah—I'll bet you wouldn't," cut in Jimmy with exceeding bitterness.

"But I do want enough to enjoy life a bit and not be cramped at every step," she finished definitely.

That should have settled it. But of course it didn't. They still saw each other. But not even Jimmy's eyes, now hot and

Illustrations by Charles D. Mitchell

Her Life

tortured, now placating and penitent, could swerve her from that decision. A kiss now and then she yielded him, simply because she couldn't help it. But she wouldn't even be engaged to him.

"Nothing doing," was her unvarying answer. "You try to run me too much as it is. It's bad enough having a boss during working hours without taking on an all-time one."

Whereupon Jimmy, who a moment before might have been making love as passionately as Romeo could have, would savagely assure her that she was heartless—hard-boiled.

But Eileen refused even to get ruffled. "Of course I'm hard-boiled," she would confess equally. "I wouldn't have a chance in the world—or at least not in Chicago—if I wasn't. I've got nobody but myself to look after me, you know."

This was true, for all that Jimmy wanted the job terribly.

"Ch-Chicago?" the aunt who had reared her in a little Michigan town had echoed when Eileen had announced her intention of moving thither. "What will you do there?"

"Get me a job," Eileen had retorted coolly.

"But there are thousands of girls looking for jobs," her aunt had protested.

THERE were. Particularly stenographers. But not, most of them, as pretty as Eileen, or even as competent, for all that she had no more than a small-town high-school training. In Chicago Eileen, then a collected, confident twenty, had got herself a job easily and quickly. As in the last two years she had got several more because she had discovered her employers' interest in her work had a tendency to become too personal.

"I don't mind when they just make eyes," she had informed Jimmy. "They all do that more or less. But when they begin with their hands—good night. I get red-headed. I can't help it."

Of that Jimmy approved. Absolutely. Although he saw no reason why she should get red-headed at *him*, which she did on this April afternoon when he sought to slip a comforting—and perhaps optimistic—arm around her.

"Cut it," she commanded sharply. "I'm not in the mood to be pawed by anybody."

This was very true. At four o'clock that afternoon she had told her latest boss where he got off and chuck up her job. Not that that bothered her—she could always get another—but she was still red-headed.

Jimmy tried to remember that and, to ease the strain, suggested a little ride that night. But that only precipitated a real quarrel, a regular stand-up and knock-down affair, metaphorically, centering around the fact that Eileen had a previous engagement. With a man of whom Jimmy plainly did not approve.

"I'm telling you straight," he assured her heatedly, "that that guy's one bad *hombre*—and I don't mean maybe. A regular Mister No-Good—where did you meet him, anyway?"

"Oh, he picked me up, too," Eileen replied coolly.

That was not true. But she knew that it would carry a double sting in its tail for Jimmy. It did. He swallowed something. But not his wrath.

"If you go out with him," he announced, in a tone that should have caused shy April hurriedly to return South, "I'm through. Absolutely and forever."

The result was what any man might have foreseen—but what no man ever does. They had parted forever—once more—and Eileen wouldn't have reconsidered Mister No-Good's invitation to dine for anything. It had become a point of honor with her.

An error that. For the Mister No-Good was obviously all that Jimmy had suggested and worse. She decided, even before they



Eileen's eyes were wide. So this was the real Sally.

reached the salad course, that she was not going back to Chicago with him in his car.

"I'll walk first," she promised herself.

The possibility of its coming to that and the problem this presented sufficed to detach her from the atmosphere of general excitement which surrounded her and which normally would have engrossed her. An atmosphere to which the life, the color and the liquor to be found in one of the smartest—and most notorious—night clubs that lie within the outer arc of Chicago's radius each contributed its charm.

Even her escort was momentarily ignored until he bent toward her, his sleek hair glistening, his eyes humid with liquor consumed.

"Aw, c'm'on," he wheedled. "A little drink will loosen you up."

As he spoke his feet had sought once again to capture one of hers in the silly amorous fashion men sometimes followed.

"Cut that out," she commanded angrily.

Instead he persisted and Eileen, losing her temper, kicked his shin vigorously.

He colored darkly. "If you think you can get away with that with me," he threatened thickly, "you don't know who you're dealing with."

"Neither do you, I should say," she cut in coldly.

Surprisingly, that silenced him for a second. But he recovered himself enough to bluster it out.

"You'll pay for that," he announced.

The orchestra, silent for a space, swung into action, horns and piano, drums and strings blended in a rhythmic barrage. From tables around them men rose, dragging scant-skirted silken girls to their feet. Eileen's escort also rose, but not to dance.

"Gotta telephone," he informed her briefly, but with a red hate for her in his eyes. "Back in a minute."

Ten minutes passed, twenty, before Eileen realized what a goop she had been not to guess what he must have had in mind—ducking out, leaving her with the check to pay.

"Somewhere between twenty and thirty dollars, I'll bet," she computed hazily, "and I have a single dollar bill and some small change."

From her hand-bag she drew compact and lip-stick. Opening the compact and surveying herself in its tiny mirror, she deftly powdered her charming nose, coolly re-etched the adventurous line of her lovely mouth. No one, to see her, would have guessed that beneath the smart little hat which she wore so cockily—and decoratively—her nimble brain was working furiously.

Even the two men who sat a few tables removed did not suspect that, for all they had been watching her this last hour.

"I tell you," announced the older, "that she's the girl we're looking for. She fits the description and I was told we'd probably find her in some place like this."

"Maybe—but if so what's she doing with the guy she came in with?" cut in his companion. "I tell you he's one of Big Mike's little bad boys. He does a bit of hi-jacking now and then and I wouldn't put machine gunning by him. You may know Boston, old top, but I know Chicago. Take your time—sit tight."

They sat tight. And so did Eileen—catching her breath in the lull before the storm. Excitement was what she craved, always, else she would not be here. But just now—

Now, from a corner of her eye, Eileen saw the waiter drawing in.

"The gentleman who was with you," he suggested—"is he coming back?"

"Of course," said Eileen. "He just stepped to the telephone." Her eyes met his squarely, coolly; yet in his, suspicion deepened.

"He's a long time about it," he commented, with a new note in

his voice that she did not care for at all. "I guess I'd better speak to the head waiter."

The head waiter appeared presently and addressed her without pretense or diplomacy.

"The man you came with drove away twenty minutes ago," he said curtly. "That little trick has been tried before and it doesn't work here. Either you pay the check or—"

"Just how much is the check?" a suave voice intervened.



C "I suppose that's not a picture of you," said the detective. Eileen had never had

They turned, surprised; Eileen even more so than her tormentors. The elder of the two men who had been watching her for so long had risen and come to the rescue. Why, she had no idea.

"Twenty-two eighty-five," supplied the waiter.

Sheer bewilderment kept Eileen silent as the amount was paid, and if her mouth was open when the newcomer seated himself at her table it was not that she might speak.

"Now that that's settled," said he soothingly, "don't you think you'd better let me take you back to your grandmother?"

"My grandmother?" echoed Eileen. She must have had one—two, in fact. But both had died before she was born; even the aunt who had reared her was now no more.

"I suppose that's not a picture of you," he retorted easily, drawing a photograph from an inner pocket and passing it over to her.

Eileen glanced at the picture. She had never had a dress such as the girl in the picture wore, but otherwise, feature for feature—

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even eye for eye and tooth for tooth—the picture might have been of her.

"Let's get out of here anyway," he suggested abruptly, as her startled eyes met his.

This, at least, found Eileen responsive. She couldn't get out of the place any too quickly.

He was making a mistake, of course, but she decided it might be as well to delay his discovery of it for the time being.



such a dress, but otherwise the picture might have been of her.

The other man trailed him and joined them in the car that was waiting outside. Eileen suffered a momentary qualm before she trusted herself to it, but her suspicions were allayed by the directions given the chauffeur. She decided, again, that she might as well let herself be carried back into the city before she took up the question of mistaken identity.

So not until the car had swung into the brilliantly lighted Loop did she break the silence. "I may as well tell you," she began, "that—"

"Tell it to your grandmother," suggested the elder man humorously. "She's here in Chicago and—"

The car came to a standstill; the uniformed starter of one of Chicago's great hotels sprang to open the door.

"But," protested Eileen desperately, "you're all wrong."

A hand, half persuasive, half peremptory, was thrust under her arm. "Remember that your grandmother could have had you arrested," she was informed. "You might as well come along peacefully."

Eileen, glimpsing the crowded lobby, decided that she might as well. So she let herself be led to an elevator which shot them all upwards.

A long carpeted corridor, then a door which, in answer to a knock, was opened by an elderly maid.

"Oh, Miss Sally!" gasped the latter involuntarily.

Eileen did not answer. She was in the parlor of a suite. Beside a drop-light sat a sardonic-faced, bitter-eyed woman of more than seventy, whose tall spare figure the years had neither bowed nor bent. She glanced coldly at Eileen and for a moment the room seemed shrouded in abysmal silence. Then she spoke inclusively to her maid and the detective.

"Leave the room!" she commanded curtly.

Evidently she was used to being obeyed. They left promptly.

"Well, who are you?" this terrible old woman then demanded of Eileen.

"I'm beginning to wonder myself," confessed Eileen.

There was a full minute of silence. Then, "Sit down," she was commanded.

Eileen sat down, prepared for anything save the bewildering cross-examination to which she found herself subjected. It was all very well to remind herself that this old woman didn't own her and she needn't answer her, but she answered just the same. Sarah Ames Thaxter had been born on Beacon Hill, Boston, and was used to having her questions answered.

"H-m," she commented presently. "You have no family ties, nothing to keep you in Chicago. You look enough like my granddaughter"—the thin lips were briefly compressed—"to fool almost anybody. If you will return to Boston with me, keep your mouth shut and ask no questions—"

"Boston?" echoed Eileen uncertainly.

"—and do as I say, I will see that you are liberally rewarded," finished Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter.

Eileen hesitated. Boston? To her it suggested only beans and highbrows. Why should she go there? But again, why not? She was, after all, but twenty-two and the red adventurous line of her lovely mouth indexed her truly.

"I'll try anything once," she replied recklessly.

"You talk," commented Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter, "in very much the same deplorable way my granddaughter does. Her name, by the way, is Sally Thaxter. It will be yours, for the present at least. You are not to speak to anybody and if anybody speaks to you do not answer. Simply give the impression that you are sulking—in silence."

"But," began Eileen, "I don't quite understand—"

"There is no need that you should," she was assured curtly. "You look intelligent—do as you're told."

"She can't eat you, anyway," Eileen assured Eileen, privately. "Stick around and see what happens."

Eileen's first discovery was that as Sally Thaxter she was cut off definitely from her own life. She was not even permitted to return to her own room. A messenger was dispatched the

next morning to pay her rent for the next month and order her things held for her.

"But—I'll need clothes," protested Eileen.

"They will be supplied," she was informed.

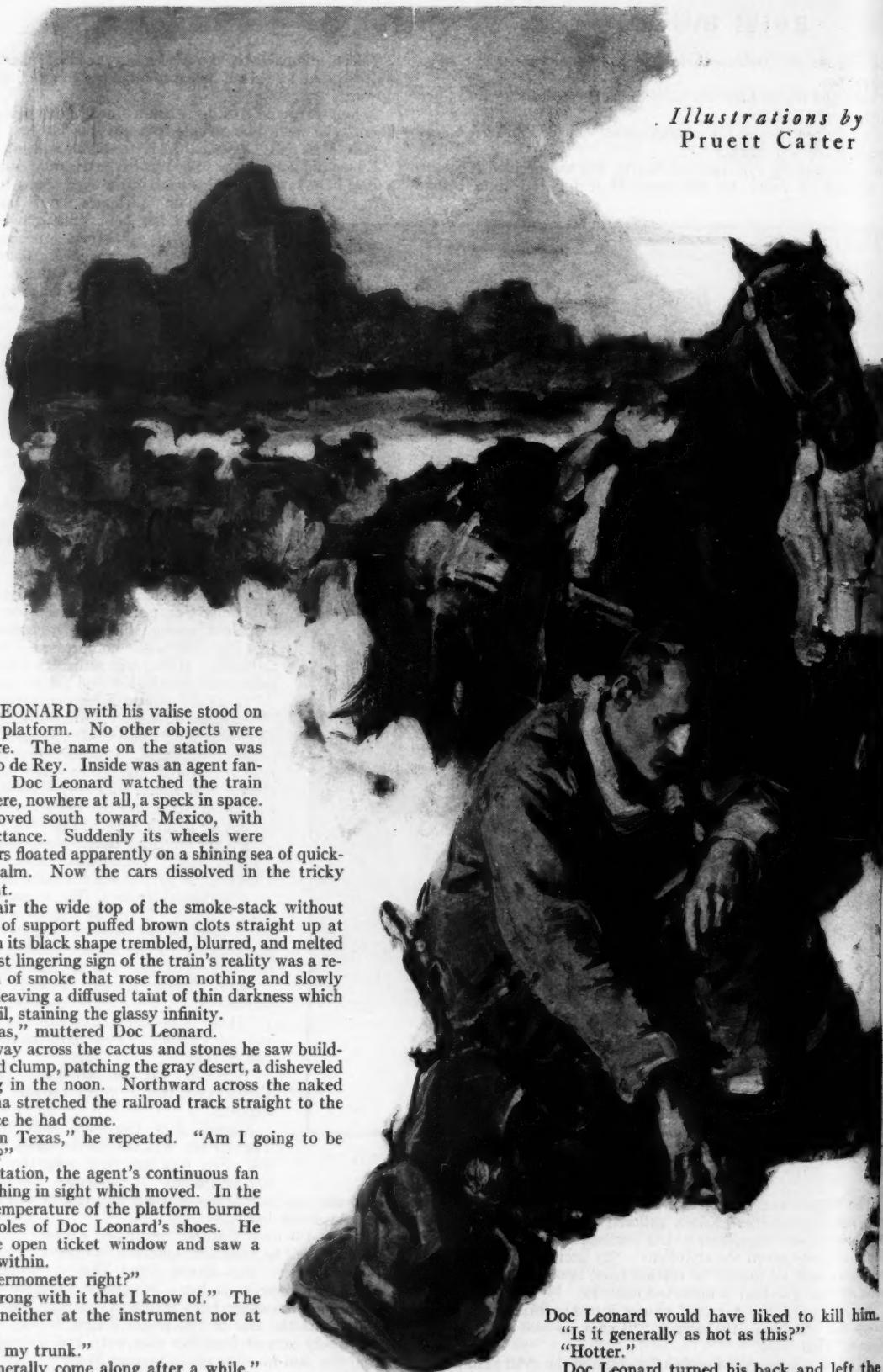
They were. Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter disdained to shop, shops were brought to her. Telephones rang, curt orders were given and messenger boys appeared, bearing boxes of all sizes. And so, at the end of two hours Eileen, freshly equipped and exquisitely attired from her skin out—and thoroughly thrilled from the skin in—was ready to start East.

"My adopted grandmother may have her faults," she told herself, "but stinginess is not among them."

Nor was it. She had six frocks any one of which would have cost her a month's salary, and the final casual contribution to Eileen's wardrobe had been a squirrel coat that must have cost a thousand if it cost a cent. Eileen was positively enamored of herself in it.

"If Jimmy could only see me now," (Continued on page 10.)

*Illustrations by
Pruett Carter*



DOC LEONARD with his valise stood on the platform. No other objects were there. The name on the station was Soto de Rey. Inside was an agent fanning himself. Doc Leonard watched the train leaving him here, nowhere at all, a speck in space. The train moved south toward Mexico, with cautious reluctance. Suddenly its wheels were gone. The cars floated apparently on a shining sea of quicksilver, dead calm. Now the cars dissolved in the tricky dazzle of light.

Up in the air the wide top of the smoke-stack without visible means of support puffed brown clots straight up at the sky. Then its black shape trembled, blurred, and melted away. The last lingering sign of the train's reality was a receding column of smoke that rose from nothing and slowly grew distant, leaving a diffused taunt of thin darkness which hung like a veil, staining the glassy infinity.

"Beats Texas," muttered Doc Leonard.

Off a little way across the cactus and stones he saw buildings in a ragged clump, patching the gray desert, a disheveled spot quivering in the noon. Northward across the naked floor of Arizona stretched the railroad track straight to the horizon whence he had come.

"Worse than Texas," he repeated. "Am I going to be sorry I came?"

Inside the station, the agent's continuous fan was the only thing in sight which moved. In the stillness the temperature of the platform burned through the soles of Doc Leonard's shoes. He walked to the open ticket window and saw a thermometer within.

"Is that thermometer right?"

"Nothing wrong with it that I know of." The agent looked neither at the instrument nor at Leonard.

"I don't see my trunk."

"Trunks generally come along after a while."

"I'm expected at Fort Chiricahua. I'm the new army surgeon."

"Not much surgery needed since Indian excitements are over. Folks don't get sick in this country."

"I suppose they'll send for me?"

"Can't say."

The agent never stopped his fan, his feet were on his desk, and

Doc Leonard would have liked to kill him.

"Is it generally as hot as this?"

"Hotter."

Doc Leonard turned his back and left the fan going. He stood six feet in his socks, his chest measured forty-two, he was twenty-seven, weighed one hundred and seventy-five stripped, and he regretted that his principles forbade murder.

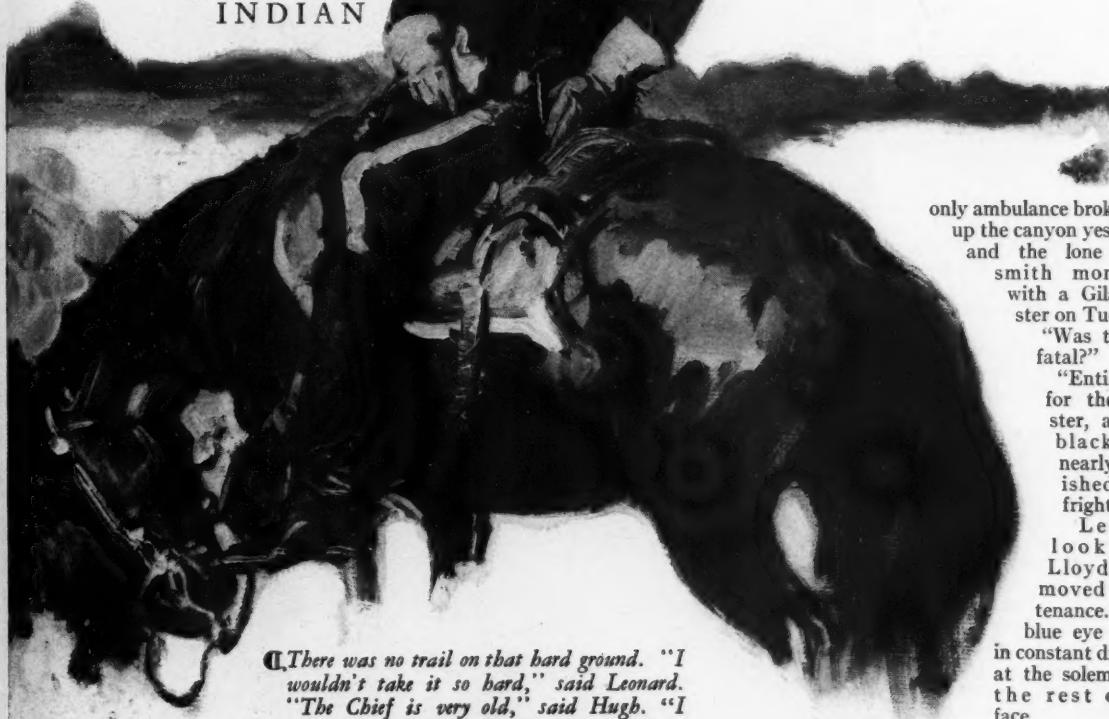
Two horsemen were approaching. These wouldn't be coming for him? No.

They crossed the track and headed for the clot of buildings.

MOLTING PELICAN

A Story
of a
BLACK
SHEEP
and a
LONELY
INDIAN

By Owen
Wister



CThere was no trail on that hard ground. "I wouldn't take it so hard," said Leonard. "The Chief is very old," said Hugh. "I should have followed him last night."

One was an Indian. Old. Looked feeble. Sat his horse like nature.

Why did the white man wear his hair so long? Away down his spring-chicken neck. Did he think he was Buffalo Bill? He couldn't ride much. Talking. Odd bird. Didn't look like the West. When he bounced to the horse's trot, it jolted his hair. If his shooting was like his riding he was no twin of Buffalo Bill's.

Fort Chiricahua was twenty miles off somewhere near those mountains. A dust was coming across the desert. For him? Then he wouldn't have to carry his valise to that awful town and sleep there. Yes, it was for him. The driver was urging his horses.

A buggy swung up to the platform, a blond young giant sprang out, tall as Doc Leonard. Not a soldier. He dragged off his gauntlet and extended a strong hand in greeting.

"My name is Hugh Lloyd. I am sorry to have kept you waiting. I am always late. My birth was behind time. M' fawther has reasoned with me in vain." He stopped. His deep voice rang with a welcome which would have disarmed Leonard had he been waiting for hours. "Jump right in. Let me have your valise."

He caught it and swung it behind the seat. A quiet and enchanting smile shone for a moment in his serious face.

"Major Wyckling asked me to meet you. He presents his compliments and apologizes for not sending the ambulance. The

only ambulance broke down up the canyon yesterday; and the lone blacksmith monkeyed with a Gila monster on Tuesday."

"Was the bite fatal?"

"Entirely so for the monster, and the blacksmith nearly perished with fright."

Leonard looked at Lloyd's unmoved countenance. The blue eye seemed in constant diversion at the solemnity of the rest of the face.

"Is one blacksmith enough?"

"Major Wyckling says that one of anything is considered very extravagant by the war department since the final collapse of the Indians. I must buy some ketchup. Do you like ketchup? We can make my ranch by supper time, and I'll drive you in to the Post in the morning. Do you want anything in town?"

Leonard wanted a shave. On the way, he learned that Fort Chiricahua was now a two-troop Post, with four commissioned officers, three married, and a contract chaplain, also married, who seldom preached less than forty minutes and had strange notions about the ten lost tribes of Israel. These he was apt to spring upon his congregation when he ran dry of other subjects. He had got hold of an unfortunate Indian—

"Why, I saw them!" Leonard interrupted. "Is that funny thing on horseback a person?"

"So he's in town today? Well, you are going to see him every day of your life."

"What's he want to look like that for?"

"I have been tempted to get intoxicated and ask him. Temptations often assail my weak nature."

"Why does his wife let him?"

"She's the mother of his continual offspring."

"Poor woman."

"He's only thirty. The ladies at the Post know she is forty. Her husband is surely faithful. Why pity her?"

"Well, I'll skip church."

"You'll go. All go. Major Wyckling prefers it. Soon it will seem like an event to you. We starve for events. The defeat and destruction of the Apaches last October was an event. The sand-storm on the third of April was the next event. Nothing between. In this glorious territory, sir," Hugh Lloyd continued—and the

oratorical turn his voice and language had suddenly taken caused Leonard to look at him again—"in this glorious territory, Mother Nature is not quite herself." Lloyd shook his head gravely.

"If it may be said without irreverence, she is a freak." Again he shook his head. "But she is a grand one, and powerful. Beneath her influence I have become a freak with all the rest of the population. In due time, so will you." His voice sank to a deep bass note of prophecy.

Into whose charge have I fallen? wondered Leonard. Freak? But another look at Lloyd's eye reassured him. Deep in it, the spark of diversion burned brighter, though otherwise the gravity was unchanged. Had the sonorous voice trembled and steadied again? No brain I have met, thought the young surgeon, has taken these wild flights straight out of the matter-of-fact into the fantastic.

"Can I persuade you that the Indians are the ten lost tribes of Israel?" Lloyd now inquired.

"Our American Indians? Jews? You cannot."

"I cannot persuade myself. Do you know why? If they were, we'd be confined to the reservations, and they'd go to Harvard and have offices in Wall Street and spend their summers in Paris." He pointed up the street as they reached Soto de Rey. It was the old Indian. "That is Molting Pelican. He's waiting for Absalom, who is having his inexcusable hair trimmed."

"Why doesn't his wife do it for him?"

"She is no Delilah, though he's her Samson."

"Isn't it time you told me his real name?"

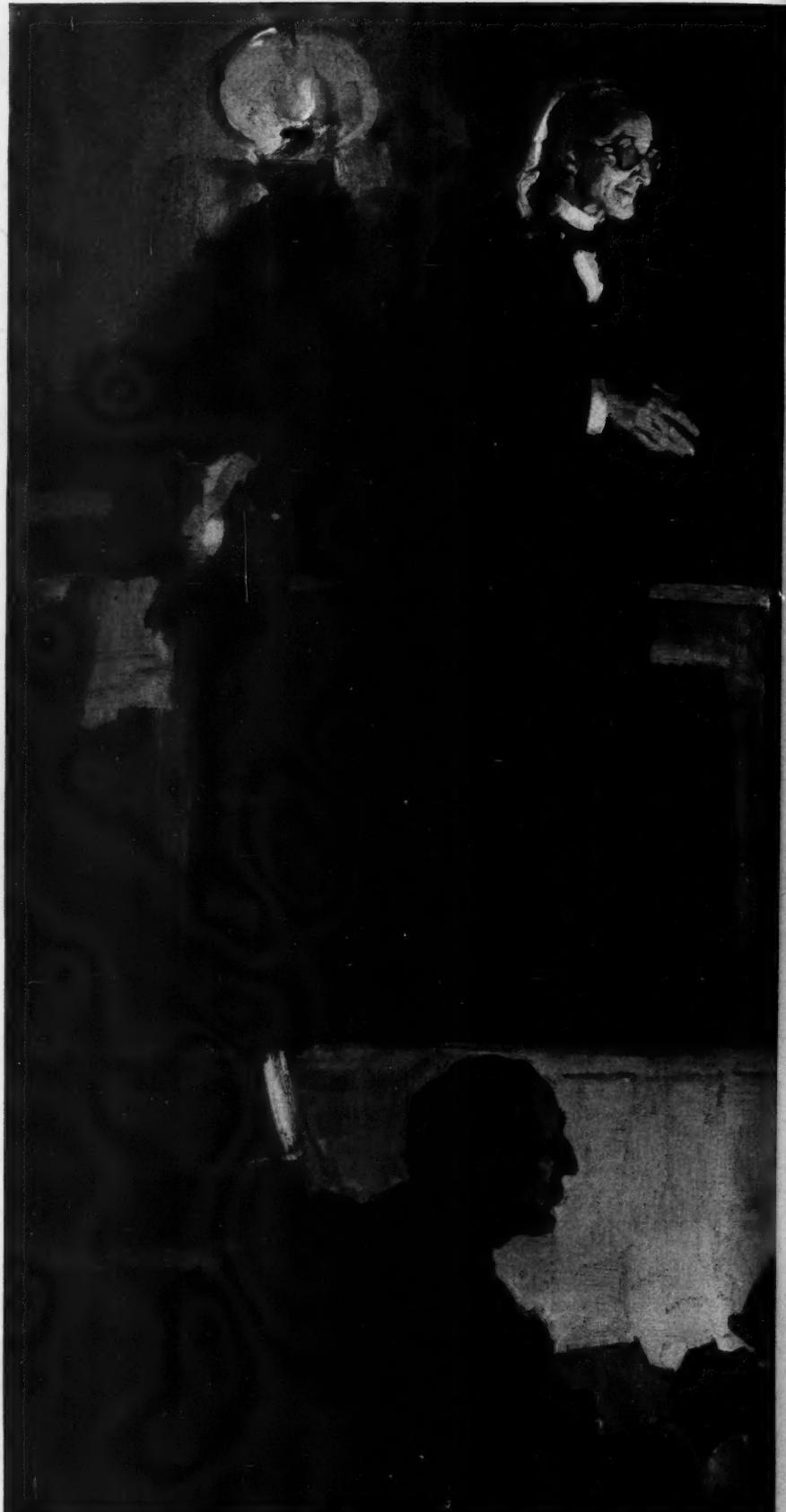
"The Reverend Xanthus Merrifew, to whom you will listen for forty minutes next Sunday. Here we are. Get your shave, and I'll be back for you . . . You have known better days, have you not, Molting Pelican?"

"How," returned the savage meekly. His eyes in his wrinkled face had a look of resigned confusion, which warmed and brightened when he saw Hugh Lloyd.

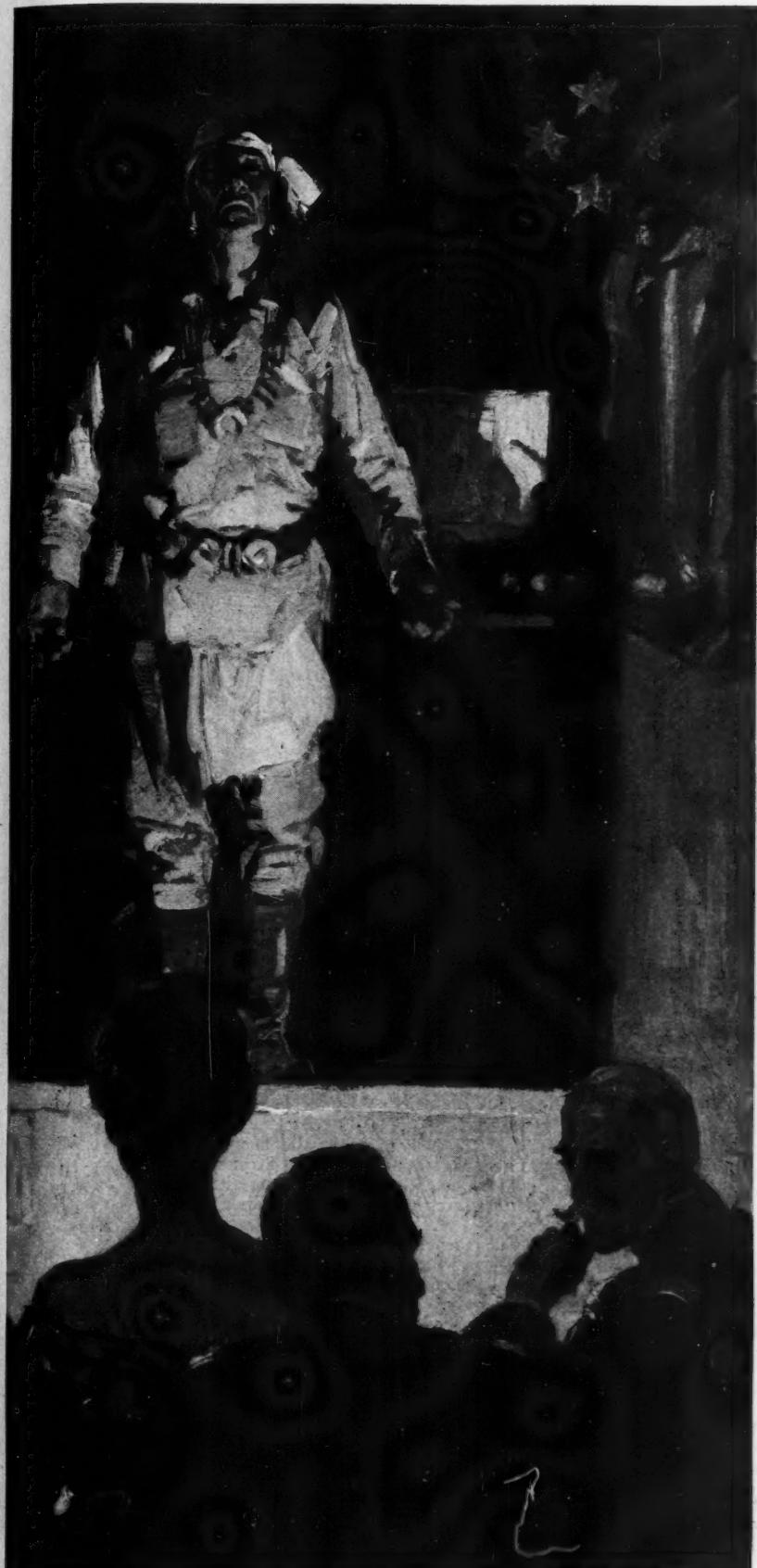
"Do you feel Abraham and Isaac and Jacob boiling in your veins this bright beautiful morning, O Pelican?"

"It is a fine day," pronounced the savage, and he actually smiled at Hugh.

"As you see, he has not yet recovered his ancestral memory. Go in and get shaved." Hugh Lloyd now spoke a



"**N**obody had ever seen anything like lost tribes of Israel, but none had amazed eyes as Molting Pelican, in



this. They had heard of the theory of the ten witnessed a demonstration of it. They stared with obedience to the chaplain's motion, began to speak.

pleasant word or two in the Apache's own tongue, and drove down the street. The old man looked after him as a dog turns to his master whom he must not follow, and then settled into his saddle with a long breath and the look of resigned confusion back in his eyes.

Inside the shop the barber was engaged with the clergyman behind the privacy of a curtain; and as his young assistant began with brush and razor upon Leonard's face, the unemployed of Soto de Rey gathered at the window to stare earnestly at the operation.

I wonder how long this weather will last? thought Leonard. Freaks? Well, there were a good many in Texas. This barber is rough. Curious how you miss a life that is over, which you hated while it was going on. I hope I'll see a good deal of Lloyd. I suppose they'll transfer me to another Post sometime. This barber is getting more awkward . . .

Then the razor cut him.

"Look out!"

"Excuse me, sir." The assistant stopped his razor nervously.

"You've done it again!"

"I'm sorry, sir, I'll take care." But the stropping was still nervous.

"Now look here. Are you doing this on purpose?" Leonard sat up.

"Honest to Pete, I'm doing my best, sir," wailed the assistant, now stropping his razor with a quaking hand. "It won't happen again."

"It will not." Leonard leaped out of the chair and saw himself in the glass; and the assistant trembled beneath his oaths. "Bring me a sponge. Do you think I'll pay for this?" Noise outside turned his attention to the window. "What are those fools laughing at?"

"I won't charge you nothing, sir. You're my first job. The boss is my uncle and I only come here yesterday for my lungs. I black boots in Los Angeles."

"What's he kicking about, Charlie?" It was a hoarse, dangerous voice behind the curtain—the sort of voice that goes with thrust-out jaws and short hair down the back of the neck. "We want no kickers here."

"You come out," said Leonard, "and I'll kick a goal from the field with you."

The unemployed of Soto de Rey had fallen silent, and as many noses as could reach the window were flattened against it. They had been hoping for such an incident as this. Charlie's uncle came out. Physically he was one with his voice; even his stunted mustache bristled with danger. He looked silently at Leonard, and war faded from his eye.

"Don't hurry," said Leonard.

"Say," said the uncle, "I don't want trouble with you."

Charlie ventured out of the corner, and the unemployed took their noses off the window and began dejectedly to disperse.

"Bring me a sponge," said Leonard.

"Charlie, get (Cont. on page 182)

By Brig. Gen. Henry J. Reilly, O. R. C.



THE more facts I dug out, the more war leaders I interviewed the more I saw that the great question during the summer of 1918 was:

"Would America get enough soldiers on the battlefields of France before it was too late?"

The great fear of the Allies in 1918 was that we would be unable to make good the loss to their side of the 3,000,000 soldiers who disappeared from their ranks when Russia dropped out of the war.

The great hope of the Germans was that, free from Russia and able to concentrate practically all their forces in France, the smashing blows of Hindenburg and Ludendorff would crumple up the Allies before we could do anything.

Nowhere were the fears and hopes excited by this tense situation more openly expressed than in the secret councils of the Allied Supreme War Council at Versailles.

Therefore, upon returning home from Europe I sought out our representative on that Council, General Tasker H. Bliss.

Pulling one side or the other of his gray mustache, he said to me: "When the Supreme War Council at Versailles took up the question of the General Policy for 1918, the four heads of the United States, French, British and Italian governments adopted one based on the assumption that success could be obtained only by enough American troops arriving to restore to the Allies the balance of man-power and keep it restored."

"In short, it was the Allied conviction as early as the month of November, 1917, that the Germans were about to begin the transfer of a minimum (and more could be made available) of fifty divisions (650,000 men) from the Eastern to the Western Front in France, which would more than give them the balance hitherto held by the Allies.

"They had no hope of meeting this and on every occasion frankly so stated, except in a prompt and rapid increase in the arrival of American man-power."

By the first of July, 1918, the tension and anxiety were acute.

In March, Hindenburg and Ludendorff with their reinforcement of fifty divisions brought from the Russian Front had heavily attacked the British.

The British Fifth Army of approximately 200,000 was practically wiped out of existence—killed, wounded, captured, dispersed! It was the greatest defeat in British military history!

The fighting spread northward.

During March and April this great battle cost the British at least 250,000, killed, wounded and captured.

Added to this enormous Allied loss was the weakening effect on the French Army because of the help they gave the British.

84

First, the hole made in the line in March had to be filled up. Second, reinforcements had to be sent to the north where the Germans were driving ahead.

The French sent a total of forty divisions with a large force of cavalry and additional artillery, about 750,000 men, or nearly one-half of the fighting strength of their army. To do this, twenty-five percent of their divisions along the rest of the front had to be taken out. Thus besides heavy battle casualties the greater part of their line was so thinned out as to be very weak.

On May twenty-seventh Hindenburg and Ludendorff started their second great attack, along the Chemin-des-Dames from its eastern end to Reims. This part of the line was thinly held by French divisions and some British divisions sent there to rest after the March fighting.

The total force used by the Germans was 500,000 men with 4,000 pieces of artillery.

The attack swept over everything. By June third, it came to rest on the Marne River between Château-Thierry and Dormans. When would the next great blow come? Could the Allies stop it? Because of the heavy Allied losses from the March and May attacks and their consequent lack of reserves would it crash through this time, ending the war in Germany's favor?

On March twenty-first, when the first German attack began,

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TRUTH

Illustration by
Herbert M. Stoops



American reinforcement came to our Allies at a decisive moment.

there were 197 German divisions in France. By May eleventh, more had arrived bringing the total to 208—a force of more than 2,500,000 men.

The French and British had different opinions as to where the blow would fall. Enemy actions kept them guessing.

Picture a warm, calm July night, with the stars by their brilliance attracting the gaze upward. Hardly a sound disturbs the apparent peacefulness of the scene. Apparent peacefulness, because it is the calm which precedes the terrific storm of an artillery fire such as the world has never before seen.

From Château-Thierry in the east, along the Marne River to

Dormans, thence to the north of Reims and across the chalky plains of the Champagne, almost to the thick forest of the Argonne, a distance of 85 miles, almost a million men wait in breathless expectancy, and that terrible anxiety which comes to many before combat, for the opening crash of artillery which will begin the second Battle of the Marne, one of the great decisive battles of history.

To the north of the line are 650,000 soldiers in the field-gray of Germany, who make up the armies of von Boehm, von Mudra and von Einem all under the Crown Prince of Germany. Opposite them, stretching from Château-Thierry to Reims, is the Fifth French Army, commanded by General Berthelot. And from Reims east across the Champagne, the Fourth French Army under General Gouraud.

In these two armies are three American divisions, more than the equivalent of six French, British or German ones because of their strength of 28,000 men each.

In the middle of Gouraud's army is the 42nd Infantry Division commonly called the Rainbow because made up of units from twenty-six states—from Minnesota and Illinois on the north to Alabama and Texas on the south; from New York on the east to California on the west. Made up of National Guardsmen, some of its regiments have long battle tradition to live up to.

The New York and Alabama infantry regiments, now friendly rivals, served in opposing armies during the Civil War. The Ohio infantry also has a Civil War record. The Iowa regiment not only distinguished itself in the Civil War but fought during the Philippine insurrection in a way which will never be forgotten.

Among the ranks of the division were many sons and grandsons of the men who made these past (Continued on page 217)

WEEK-END

THE Friday five-fifteen was the most important train of the week, except perhaps for the Monday Sunrise Special. It made only a stop or two on the way down from New York and the Pullman service it afforded was keyed to its distinguished patronage.

Several hundred thousand dollars' worth of automobiles were waiting for it in the smoothly graveled area beside the station, fender to fender, shining competitively in the sun which seemed to have been chartered that afternoon for the train's arrival at a quarter past five o'clock.

Everything was excessively orderly and well managed. Neat station wagons with plain initials, suggesting the wealth of their owners by their very simplicity, limousines, open cars built like torpedo-boats were lined up together and chauffeurs stood ready to gather up luggage.

There were women and girls and children with sea-brown skins and handsome bared heads.

On the platform some of the women greeted each other or called from car to car. They were nearly all thin women who wore hardly any make-up at this hour in the afternoon and they had high, monotonous, confident voices. Their clothes had been designed for country wear and were now being reproduced, without the labels, for suburban women in dozens of cities.

The whole picture, cars and people, had the stamp of an original. Not a great original, but still it copied nothing but its own inspiration.

There were two Rines' cars waiting as well as their station wagon, for the Rines were having a large house-party over the weekend. The Bates children had been sent down to meet their father who fancied himself as a paterfamilias every now and then.

Bill Holt was there with a big car which was rather dusty, for he had raced over a country road from Sag Harbor where he had been playing with and on a yacht, to meet a convivial party of friends. Hilda Hastings was still enough in love with her husband to wait for his train and flush with eagerness as it whistled in the distance.

The light tan car was there for Louis Perrault, the artist. Those were the very notable ones, at least until Judy Chaloner arrived and swung her car into the open area because there was no place left to park.

It was always guesswork as to whom Judy might be meeting. Except that it would undoubtedly be a man. She pushed in the ignition key, slammed the car door and walked across the gravel, waving a casual hand to Bill Holt. Everyone who did not know who she was, all the unimportant summer people, stared. But the curious thing was that people who had known her all their lives also watched her.

She was beautiful of course, but very possibly not the most beautiful woman on the platform. She was dressed in one soft stroke of tan—hat, Angora dress and slim legs—but nearly everyone with a decent figure and any money wore imported Angora.

Perhaps it was her fearless, careless head and inscrutable eyes. Perhaps it was because scandal had flamed about her and yet left her apparently unscathed.

The Pullman porters lifted down dozens of bags, little dressing-cases shaped and protected as if they held precious fittings, heavy suitcases of fine leather, hat-boxes, golf bags. Their owners followed, women in thin, dark traveling clothes, and men who, in spite of the ease of their travel, bore signs of fatigue and heat.

They took possession of the platform.

Down at its end, from the day coach, other passengers got off the train without attendance and walked away into further inconspicuousness. They did not share in the social event of five-fifteen.

Judy Chaloner stood quite still as if waiting for her guest to seek her out.

"Company coming, Judy?" asked Bill Holt. She nodded. "I counted on having you play with us this weekend."

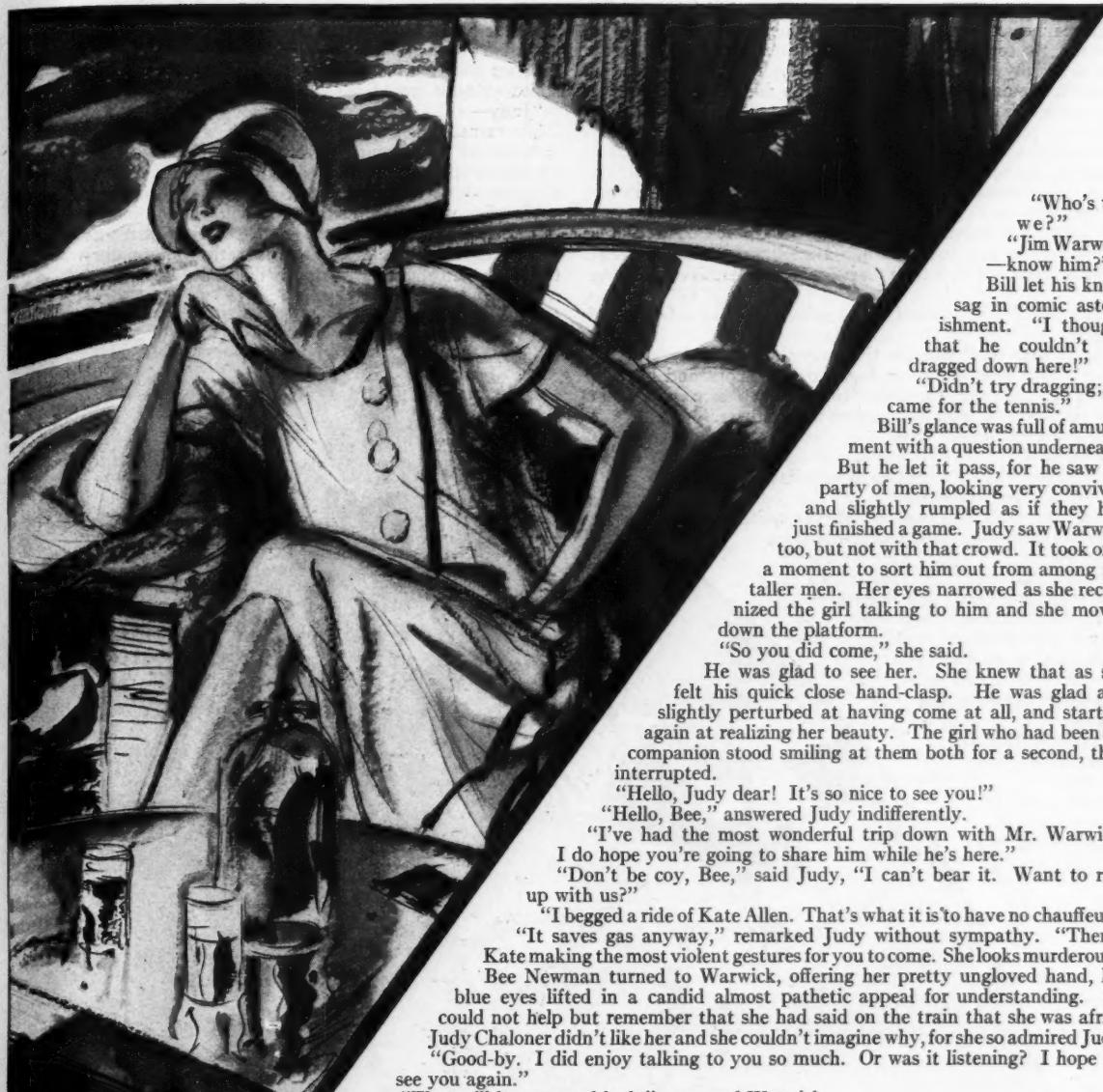
"Maybe we will."



Bee was saying something Warwick had once agreed with; it sounded sententious and dull.

By Margaret Culkin Banning

The Story of a Serious Millionaire



"Who's the
we?"

"Jim Warwick
—know him?"

Bill let his knees
sag in comic aston-
ishment. "I thought
that he couldn't be
dragged down here!"

"Didn't try dragging; he
came for the tennis."

Bill's glance was full of amuse-
ment with a question underneath.

But he let it pass, for he saw his
party of men, looking very convivial
and slightly rumpled as if they had
just finished a game. Judy saw Warwick
too, but not with that crowd. It took only
a moment to sort him out from among the
taller men. Her eyes narrowed as she recog-
nized the girl talking to him and she moved
down the platform.

"So you did come," she said.

He was glad to see her. She knew that as she
felt his quick close hand-clasp. He was glad and
slightly perturbed at having come at all, and startled
again at realizing her beauty. The girl who had been his
companion stood smiling at them both for a second, then
interrupted.

"Hello, Judy dear! It's so nice to see you!"

"Hello, Bee," answered Judy indifferently.

"I've had the most wonderful trip down with Mr. Warwick.
I do hope you're going to share him while he's here."

"Don't be coy, Bee," said Judy, "I can't bear it. Want to ride
up with us?"

"I begged a ride of Kate Allen. That's what it is to have no chauffeur."
"It saves gas anyway," remarked Judy without sympathy. "There's
Kate making the most violent gestures for you to come. She looks murderous."

Bee Newman turned to Warwick, offering her pretty ungloved hand, her
blue eyes lifted in a candid almost pathetic appeal for understanding. He
could not help but remember that she had said on the train that she was afraid
Judy Chaloner didn't like her and she couldn't imagine why, for she so admired Judy.

"Good-by. I did enjoy talking to you so much. Or was it listening? I hope I'll
see you again."

"That will be my good luck," answered Warwick.

Judy would not help. She made no suggestions as to further meetings. Against that
omission, which was in itself rebuff, the other girl was powerless and Warwick felt vaguely
sorry for her.

But she was gone in an instant. The platform was clearing, motors were moving off in rapid
procession.

They walked to Judy's car and various men pointed out Warwick to their wives.

"Nobody knows how rich he is," said young Hastings to Hilda.

"And nobody knows how poor the Chaloners are," answered Hilda, "or what Judy will do next."
For the moment she was doing the most obvious thing in the world. One quick backward swing,
one forward and they were driving through the streets of the old town.

It was a very old town indeed. Three hundred years before, a group of sturdy settlers had decided to
chance existence and livelihood here. They had laid out their lanes from village to fishing beach, from village
to outlying farm, built their meeting-house, chosen their graveyard, put up houses and mills so shingled that
they would weather the sea air sweeping up from the ocean which rumbled so close to them.

The lanes had broadened now into motor roads but boasted their original dates on sign-boards placed there by
a later generation which knew the high market value of ancestry. The graveyard was carefully preserved in all
its quaintness. The meeting-houses were larger reproductions of those first struggling ones.

Most of the great houses along the dunes and those set back in parked estates and sur-
rounded by high clipped hedges were still shingled, for the salt air had lost none of its potency.
Along the roads honeysuckle bloomed, as no doubt it had when the Indians sold the land
to those early Long Island colonists.

"They've at least been clever enough to hang on to the beauty of the place," said Warwick.

"You shouldn't take your prejudices along on weekends, Jim."
"It's not against the place."

"Thanks."

"You know what I mean. It's the summer colony that gets me. The waste. The swagger. I came down here once several years ago. I thought I'd like to get near the ocean. So they tried to sell me nine houses and a spare sand-dune. And all they talked about was the social rating of the neighbors. It made me sick."

"It's awfully important," said Judy reflectively, "about neighbors. Imagine having someone you didn't like drifting in all the time to borrow butter."

"I knew you'd make fun of me. I came in spite of it."

"I wondered why you came. I wasn't sure you would."

"I wasn't either. But here I am, Judy."

If it were his concession and her triumph, she took no advantage of it.

"We'll have to stir up some fun," she said; "it looks as if Bill Holt has some gay boys down. The Rines promise a party tomorrow night. And if the rain holds off the tennis ought to be swell."

"Look here," he protested, "I'm going to be like a fish out of water."

"Ocean near by if you feel that way."

"Let's turn around and go back to New York and have an evening by ourselves. Come on—that garden where we were the other night will be open by the time we get there."

She shook her head. "No."

"Why not?"

"I told you why. I want you to see what I'm like."

"I know what you're like."

"No, you don't. A person is never quite normal on shipboard. And roof-gardens are always unreal."

As she spoke she turned the car up a drive leading off the main highway and they approached a long house with many windows and fugitive ivy trailing up its green shutters. It fronted on rose-gardens but the sea was at its back.

"This is the old homestead," she told him.

"It's a very handsome place," said Warwick.

"It ought to be, considering the rent. I'll leave the car here. We'll probably want to use it later."

Again she flicked off the ignition as a Filipino boy came out to get Warwick's bag and she led her guest into a deep hall cool and fragrant with the roses which filled a pewter bowl on a vaguely shining table. It was so quiet and peaceful that for a moment Warwick had a vague sense of home-coming. Judy had tossed her hat on the table beside the roses and that close-cropped head with its rough little curls stirred him as he had feared—and hoped—that it would.

"Judy—"

She turned at his voice and footstep.

"Cigaret?" she inquired with one already between her lips and her lighter still flaring in her hand. "Or would you like a drink?"

Warwick was in no hurry to come down to dinner. He had gathered from the Filipino boy that the hour of it was approximately eight and guessed that it varied informally with the thirst of the company. Warwick disliked smart people. For him they cumbered the earth, with their useless activities, their habit



of falsifying life by refusing to recognize its seriousness, their waste and extravagances.

It was not penuriousness that lay back of his criticism. He spent money as generously as it had come to him, on objects he considered worthy. He believed in healthful recreation and had built a big lodge in the Maine woods, which was to be his place of diversion. But few people went there to see him and fewer came twice.

Warwick himself spent most of his time in the city and left the place to a caretaker. He had, however, gone to London in the spring to consult with the manager of his London office and on the boat when he came back he had met Judy Chaloner, curled up in the steamer chair next to his own and looking like a tired, thoughtful child.

It was three days before he discovered exactly who she was and then it did not seem to matter. She was, he felt sure, apart from the environment which had a pretended claim on her. He told her so. And she had smiled and said something foo'ish and delightful and then some other things

so true to the majesty of the
sky and ocean that
he was pulled
out of his

previous shyness and his innate mistrust of women.

Warwick had been disappointed in women, not in any particular one but in the group. Their habits offended him. He wanted them to stay clothed in all the original adjectives like true and sweet and pure and motherly and devoted, and they were stripping themselves of such things. Part of his ideas had come from the quiet school where the boy who was to inherit great wealth had been so guardedly educated, and part from his mother who had feared greatly for him. He had made a constant effort to be true to her memory, and remembering her conscientious life, crowded with good works, he found smart and idle women abhorrent.

To make assurance doubly sure he had not married; which may have been the reason why, at thirty-three, his grievance against women was growing. They were slipping. They were letting the world down. And then came Judy's curly head and her chin which tilted upward and the way she laughed out like a child when she was pleased, to throw his convictions into confusion.

When he went down to dinner at last, on the very stroke of eight, no one appeared to be impatient at his delay. Duffield Chaloner was there, ready to greet his guest very genially. Warwick wondered how Chaloner did it. He must be staggering under a terrific load of expense, yet here he was, very much the host in his leased drawing-room, serving the most authentic and valuable liquor and quite enjoying his own jokes.

Of course his wife might have something left. She had plenty when she was married, but a great deal of high living had flowed under the bridge since then. At a presumable forty-five Gratia Chaloner was still beautiful, still spoiled, still impetuous and eager. She spoke to Warwick with a kind of detachment, not as a hostess wondering if he were comfortable under her roof but as a woman looking a man over to find if he were interesting.

There were a couple of young Stephensons present and Greenough, the architect. He was the extra man for Mrs. Chaloner, who always liked that arrangement. There was Judy in a green dress
(Cont. on page 108)

Warwick wanted to run his hand through Judy's curls.



A S K N I F E

LIP of the

By ROBERT H

DWELLERS in cities, at any rate if they contain within them any residue of the savage man from whom they derive, must be pricked at times by a longing to get away from houses and the everlasting cries of the streets into the wastes and the wilds, where nature definitely dominates man. This getting away—it is a sort of strange going home. It brings to the inner man a curious intimate satisfaction, the happy sense of an appeased appetite. He has a feeling of finding himself in loneliness.

One day in London I felt I must get away, go right away, if only for a week or ten days. My brain felt jaded with work. My ears were weary of noise.

I opened a yellow railway guide, turned over the pages, and at last paused, arrested by a note of simplicity which seemed to sound clearly, delicately through my mind after all the hubbub of blatancy. Upon the page before me was a small picture of a whitewashed house, ground floor and one story above it, and underneath was printed the following advertisement:

The Trout Inn
Sand Hills
Cumberland.

Proprietress Mrs. Emma Marsh.

Comfortable rooms for travelers. Good plain cooking. Reasonable terms. Fine sands. Good bathing. Golf. Fresh-water fishing. Excursions to the Lake District. Open all the year round.

A simple advertisement enough, and that was just why it attracted me. I never had heard of Sand Hills, Cumberland. I never had heard of the Trout Inn. Mrs. Emma Marsh's name was unknown to me.

I pictured her as a plump red-cheeked Cumberland widow great in the cooking of that famous Cumberland dish, ham and eggs. And she must be a sensible woman because so unpretentious. Actually she announced her house for travelers as an inn—good old, well-nigh forgotten word. Surely, surely the Trout Inn for me!



“Women can be cruel when the mother comes

And quickly I turned the pages once more and looked up Sand Hills in the railway part of the guide. Yes, there was a station. I glanced at a map. Sand Hills lay on the coast between Carnforth and Whitehaven, much nearer to the latter than to the former town. It could not be very far from Wast Water where the mountains begin.

The month was October. The golf, the fishing would be all right. And I could walk on the lonely sands—they surely must be lonely—and forget all the voices of London.

I got out a Norfolk jacket, a pair of old gray trousers. I packed a suitcase. On the following morning before ten o'clock I was at Euston railway station.

It was good to get to Carnforth. It was better still, having changed to a train of the Furness railway, to run along the coast even northward. Often we were close to the sea.

It was a rather dark afternoon. The foam of the tumbling sea seemed to make a long gash in the grayness. When I let down the carriage window on the sea side a sharp, eager wind came in to me, salty and almost fierce. Gulls flew up in squadrons. Lonelier, ever lonelier grew the land.

Then the sea was blotted out and the train ran between the hummocky sand-hills and meadows enclosed by stone walls. Five minutes later the sea again came in sight with a few cold-looking houses on a low treeless hill, and below, at the edge of

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HIGHENS

Illustrations by F. R. Gruger



uppermost. 'Save Markie or I shall hate you,' said Sybil. It was that sentence caused the tragedy."

pale yellow flat sands, another line of small houses set along a rough bit of green going into the sands.

The train slowed up, stopped. I heard a Cumbrian voice saying, "Sand Hills! Sand Hills!"

Destination—Trout Inn—Emma Marsh!

THE wind up there seemed to emphasize, even to make the loneliness of the place. The seaside season was of course quite over, and there was certainly no crowd in the Trout Inn. True, as I entered it, treading on oilcloth past a stuffed otter in a glass case, I heard rough talk coming evidently from a concealed bar. But when I went down a dipping passage, covered with more oilcloth, into the "coffee-room"—if you please—to have a belated tea I found only two persons there: an elderly lady with bandeaux on which sat a white cap trimmed with shining black cherries, and a thin, long-nosed and dreary-faced man, perhaps her son, who was playing a patience while she did some worsted work by one of the large windows which shook under the assault of the wind. They looked at me as if with suspicion, certainly with surprise.

Tea finished, I resolved to go out at once and have a look round, and again I moved over the oilcloth. Just as I reached the stuffed otter a large elderly woman emerged from a narrow passage on the left. She had a rubicund determined face, steady

eyes and smooth brown hair partly covered by a black bonnet which had unfastened strings.

"Mrs. Emma Marsh?" I said to myself.

"Good afternoon," said I.

"Good afternoon, sir," she replied, with a Cumbrian accent.

"This is your hotel?"

"The Trout is mine, sir. My husband's been dead these ten years. I hope you'll feel yourself comfortable."

"So far I'm delighted," I said. "I'm just going out to get a breath of your splendid air."

"Though I says it as shouldn't, sir, the air here is every bit as good as Blackpool's."

"I'm sure it is."

And then I went out.

I crossed the railway line, passed through a swing gate and was soon on the sands. Although the tide was flowing it was still far out. I began to walk briskly and—I don't know why—I walked southwards.

I love the feel of firm sand under my feet, and after London days the glorious freshness of the wind, coming straight to me over the rollers, stung me into a physical activity I had not known for long. I walked with energy, on and on into the loneliness of this strangely desolate shore. The lights of Sand Hills faded and died behind me.

Now, when I had walked for perhaps twenty minutes I was aware of a light at some distance away on my left, raised, it seemed to me, a little in the darkness, as if it shone on one of the low sand-hills and was close to the shore. I stood still on the sand and looked at it.

A lonely house here, in this desolate place, in the midst of this rummage of hillocks away from any highroad! Curiosity took hold of me as I stared at that yellow eye which stared back at me steadily, and yet, as I fancied, somehow stealthily.

My imagination got to work. Some oddity must have lighted that lamp, some crank, some peculiar specimen of humanity who had a morbid taste for solitude and who had found it here on the fringe of this desolate shore in the midst of winds and sea voices.

My desire for quick progress along the hard sands was checked, and after standing still for some time I turned off at right angles and made my way towards the light. I got among some low rocks, interspersed with sandy basins and small pools of water, and after negotiating them found myself at the foot of a slope of loose sand and pebbles leading up to the sand-hills, among which I now could see the light shining out of a bungalow which was set in the midst of a rabbit-warren.

I mounted the slope and stood still.

The bungalow looked fairly large and amazingly solitary. It had a jutting window. In the window, or very near it, was set the lamp which had drawn me to the fence of barbed wire protecting the sandy demesne. (There seemed no attempt at a garden.) I was standing among the pebbles looking at the general darkness of this house raised a little above me, and broken only by the one light, when I heard a man's voice say, "What is it you want, eh?"

The voice was rather deep. It sounded cultivated but acutely suspicious. It startled me, as I had not seen anyone near me in the dim evening light which was darkening rapidly into the blackness of night. Before I had made any reply to the abrupt question addressed to me I saw the large figure of a man rise up before me from behind a small sand-bank out of a depression in the warren. He stepped up to the wire fence and confronted me.

Tall, broad but thin, he had a red, or rather purplish-red face with high cheek-bones, and bright, quickly shifting eyes whose color I couldn't determine, a thin gray mustache and wispy brown hair which showed beneath a battered old cap. He wore an obviously old mustard-yellow coat, and carried a thick gnarled stick in his right hand. His hands, I noticed, were of much the same color as his face. I guessed him to be about fifty-five and a gentleman.

"Want anything?" he added, still in the suspicious deep voice.

"No, nothing," I said.

"Then what are you doing here?" he rejoined.

"I was walking on the sands. I saw a light and wondered what it shone from, as the country along here is so lonely. That's why I am here."

I didn't look at him as I spoke, for I wanted him to look at me and be reassured. For this was a man obviously ready to be suspicious, perhaps even afraid. And he interested me. So I didn't want him to be afraid of me. Apparently he must have summed me up while I looked away, for he said in a different tone:

"You're from Sand Hills?"

"Yes. I'm at the inn for a few days to get a little air. I live in London and felt rather run down."

"Oh, you're at Emma Marsh's place," he said. There was an instant of silence. Then he added, "Well, good night to you!"

A Slip of the Knife

And I saw his big form walk away over the hillocks and depressions of the warren and disappear round a corner of the bungalow.

That same night after dinner in the coffee-room I resolved to try to have a little talk with Emma Marsh. My interview at the edge of the warren had made me, I confess, inquisitive about the dweller in the bungalow. And from the intonation of the stranger's voice when he had said, "Oh, you're at Emma Marsh's



place," I had gathered that he was on friendly terms with my landlady.

Accordingly, directly the bananas and nuts of which our dessert consisted had been dealt with, I bowed to the lady with the black cherries and the dreary young man with the long nose, made my way up the slight hill from the coffee-room, and betook myself to the stuffed otter. Opposite him on the right I had noticed a sort of parlor which I guessed to be Emma Marsh's private sanctum. As I arrived in front of it the door happened to be standing open, and I saw Mrs. Marsh within, wearing a black gown and a white cap and taking something out of a large

work-bar

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work-basket which stood upon the round table in front of her. She looked up as I appeared and said, "Good evening, sir."

"Good evening. You're cozy in here," I said, looking at the bright fire behind her. "On a windy night like this it's nice to be warm."

"Yes, sir. It's pretty near always windy here—leastways when summer's over. Would you like to step in?"

"Very much, if I may," I answered. And I stepped

Cumberland, then I drew in to Sand Hills, and finally I got to my afternoon walk.

"What wonderful sands you have here!" I said.

"Yes, sir. Blackpool hasn't any better" said my hostess, to whom evidently Blackpool represented the acme of nature's and civilization's most glorious.

"I could walk on them for miles and never be tired."

"That's what pretty near everyone as comes here says, sir. Did you go far?"

"As far as the bungalow."

I saw Mrs. Marsh—somehow, since I began to know her I felt less familiar, and mentally dropped the mere Emma from my mind—look up from her work.

"That's a good step, sir, in the dark."

"I had a few words with your neighbor."

"You did, sir?" She sounded surprised, I thought. "He was down on the shore, sir?"

"No. I went to have a look at the bungalow. He was in the warren and spoke to me."

"Did he so, sir?"

"Yes. Has he been there long? In the bungalow, I mean."

"Over eleven years now, sir."

"Got his family there, I suppose?"

"Family! Well, I never! Mr. Blow's not a family man, sir."

"Lives there alone, does he?"

"Well, sir, there's a servant comes in by the day from Brigg village—that's about a mile away—and does for him, but that's all. Did he speak to you?"

"Yes. He asked me what I was there for—what I wanted."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Marsh, and as she said it she moved her head downwards, suddenly producing a double chin. "Ah!" she repeated, as if to herself. And she pursed up her lips.

"He doesn't like people round his house, perhaps," I ventured.

"No, sir, he doesn't. He's afraid of 'em."

"Afraid—why?"

"That's what we don't know, sir, what none of us knows after his being here eleven years. But the funny thing is—" She paused. "The funny thing, sir, is this—the all the time the poor man's just pining for company."

"How d'you know that?"

"Well, he isn't afraid of me, sir, not now, and he's as good as told me so. He ain't meant to live alone."

"I wonder why he does it, then."

"So do we all, sir. Why he came here, why he stays on here year in year out, we don't none of us know."

"Did he build the bungalow?"

"It's made of iron, sir, throughout (Continued on page 137)



Q"It's surgery that saves lives," said Blow. "Or destroys them," I said. "Is that meant for me?" he asked, with bushed intensity.

in and went up to the fire as if that were the chief attraction for me.

"Sit down, sir, please, if you care to," said Mrs. Marsh, who was evidently not averse to company.

"Thanks, very much."

I sat down in a round-backed wooden chair with a hard cushion of horsehair fitted into it, and put my hands towards the fire. She sat down too, after partially closing the door, and began doing some work by the table in a thoroughly composed manner. Decidedly a somebody in her way—Mrs. Emma Marsh.

I began warily. First I talked in a general way about

Illustration by
W. Smithson Broadhead

Concluding—Tide of Empire

D'ARCY realized that despite their ruthlessness, their ignorance and arrogance, their lack of education and refinement, these squatters were of the same hardy breed that for two centuries had been pressing back the outposts of civilization along the Atlantic seaboard, until now, at last, they had reached the Pacific. Sons of the soil, these —proud, fiercely independent, reckless, courageous, curious, adventurous, eager for the battle with the wilderness. It was obvious that they constituted a horde of nature's own selective breeding, for in the battle to win the West the cowards had never started and the weaklings had died on the way; in these survivors Dermot D'Arcy saw glorious seed for this new land at the setting sun.

Evidently thoughts similar to his were animating McCready and Judson, for presently the latter said:

"We'd better not delay locatin' our cattle-range, Jud. The way this state's fillin' up the price o' land will soon start climbin'. Hello! There's some of our little gal's *vaqueros* workin' cattle."

D'Arcy's glance followed his pointing finger. "Those aren't Señorita Guerrero's *cholos*, Mac," he decided. "They're Americans."

Judson arched his eyebrows comically. "You don't suppose Americans would do anything like that, do you, Dermot?"

"Americans have no monopoly on virtue, my friend. It would seem to me that those cattle should wear the Guerrero brand, for I have never seen any other brand on the rancho. Also, if Señorita Guerrero had sold them would she not have her own *vaqueros* gather and deliver them?"

They pulled up to consider the situation. McCready and Judson, shrewd judges of cattle in bulk, estimated the herd contained not less than two hundred head. "They're worth twenty dollars in Sacramento," the former said, "which means that if them fellers yonder are rustlers our little lady stands to lose about four thousand dollars."

"Sort o' looks like we're a committee of investigation," Judson added laconically. "That girl's fights are my fights. Dermot, I reckon you're still our leader. Explain the layout to Francisco an' ask him if we can depend on him in a fight."

Francisco, apprised of the situation, nodded with mixed Indian and Castilian gravity. D'Arcy studied the herd.

"Two men riding in the rear, one on each flank and two on point. We'll ride across the front of the herd, and if the brand is a G on the right side, with a swallowtail in the left ear and the top of the right ear cut clean off, we'll ask the leaders to show a bill of sale. If they can't do that we'll have an argument, I dare say. Forward!"

They rode at a walk across the plain. When they were within two hundred yards of the head of the herd the nearest *vaquero* reined in his horse and shouted at them, at the same time raising his hand in the gesture that means "Halt!"

The four declined to halt.

"What do you want?" the *vaquero* shouted.

"None of your business!" D'Arcy shouted back. "Who are



“Obadiah!” cried Martha. “I was going away soon so I wouldn’t meet you. Oh, my dear, I didn’t want to hurt you!”

you to ask questions?” To his companions he said: “Suspicious already. I’m certain they’re rustlers.”

Instantly the rider on the near flank of the herd closed up on the man riding point, while the two riders in the same positions on the other flank started galloping around the head of the herd to reinforce their companions. Meanwhile the man who had halted them drew a rifle from a bucket slung along the side of his stock saddle.

“If you come closer I’ll fire,” he warned.

“I never knew a man who could shoot accurately from the back of a nervous horse,” D’Arcy called to his companions, and drove straight at the fellow.

The latter fired and the bullet ripped along D’Arcy’s side,

crashing to earth.

The man lay there, who was galloping, could return him out of his

“That ever honest men Mount up, flank can’t run at us; they’ll



crashing to earth, in the fall precipitating his rider over his head. The man lay still, evidently stunned by the fall. The fellow who was galloping to his aid now fired and missed; before he could return his empty rifle to the bucket McCready had tumbled him out of his saddle.

"That evens the odds, Dermod!" he cried grimly. "Rustlers or honest men, they've fired on us and now it's a fight to a finish. Mount up. The cattle are stampeding and the two riders on the flank can't run fast enough to get around the front of the herd at us; they'll be overrun if they don't watch out."

By Peter B. Kyne

A Novel of Golden California

"To the rear," D'Arcy ordered. "You and Judson take care of the two riders there. Francisco, follow me."

The herd, crazed by the sudden firing, had indeed stampeded. Realizing that they had now nothing left to fight for, since the cattle would run miles and scatter widely, the two men riding in the rear decided there could be no profit for them in a fight. They fled, galloping toward the river where a heavy oak and willow growth offered protection. But their horses were weary; the task of gathering those wild cattle had taken the edge off their stamina and the fresher mounts of McCready and Judson gained rapidly upon them.

"We're goin' to cut 'em off from the river, Mac," Judson warned. "They'll fight if they have to—an' they're goin' to have to. Their best chance is to turn an' charge us. If they do, lay along the side o' your horse, presenting a small target, then they'll do the sensible thing—shoot our horses, hopin' the horses an' us'll roll together, while they pass us in the confusion, savin' their ammunition an' ridin' to help them other two Dermod an' Francisco are after. If they can put us out o' the runnin' they won't wait to kill us."

"Seguro," McCready replied. "An' here they come." He waited until he saw the man who must attack him raise his pistol; then he whirled his horse across the advancing man's front and swung low on the opposite side of the animal, after the fashion of one who stoops to pick up some object from the ground.

He heard a pistol-shot and felt his horse flinch; instantly he rolled out of the saddle, landing on his feet; as the galloping rustler flashed by, McCready's pistol lifted him out of the saddle. A second later the other assailant, having downed Judson's horse, fled past McCready. Their pistols barked in an exchange of shots, but McCready was prone in the grass now, presenting a negligible target to the galloping horseman. He fired upward twice and saw his enemy pitch forward on his horse's neck, cling there for some fifty yards and then slide helplessly off.

"You hit, Jud?" McCready called.

Judson was picking himself up off his hands and knees. He held up his right hand and showed a shattered index-finger. "Good thing you got my man, Mac," he answered cheerfully. "The skunk's ruined my trigger-finger—for keeps, I reckon. I'll have to behave from now on!"

McCready paid no further attention to his friend. A few feet away his horse stood, his head hanging low, for he had been shot through the neck. "You'll last a little while," the killer murmured sympathetically and caressed the poor brute's nose. Then he swung into the saddle, uncoiled his riata and trotted away on the enemy's trail; when he had lassoed one of the thieves' horses, he mounted it and roped the other. Meanwhile Judson, his pistol in his left hand, had made a swift reconnaissance of the fallen.

"Good clean shootin', Mac," he complimented his friend. "Unhorsed, horsed an' on our way again." He mounted the other captive horse; they paused long (Continued on page 146)

Ourselves as Others See Us

By GLURAS



Going to the

-A New Feature

WILLIAMS



GUYAS
WILLIAMS

the *Movies*

By Maurice Leblanc

A New Series of Those

Fascinating Stories of Arsène Lupin

Drops that Trickle Away



"Are you sure that is your necklace?" asked Barnett.

THE courtyard bell on the ground floor of the Baroness Assermann's imposing residence in the Faubourg St. Germain rang loudly, and a moment later the maid brought in an envelop.

"The gentleman says he has an appointment with Madame for four o'clock."

Madame Assermann slit the envelop and taking out a card read:

THE BARNETT AGENCY
Information free.

"Show the gentleman into my boudoir immediately," she said. Valérie Assermann—the beautiful Valérie she had been called for some thirty years—still retained a measure of good looks, albeit now thick-set, past middle age and elaborately made up; her haughty and sometimes harsh expression had yet a certain candor which was not without charm.

As the wife of Assermann, the banker, she took pride in her vast house with its luxurious appointments, in her large circle of acquaintances and all the circumstances of her position. Behind her back society gossips chattered of certain scandalous adventures, and some even added that the baron, an ailing old man, had contemplated a divorce.

Baron Assermann had been confined to his bed for several weeks with heart trouble, and Valérie rearranged his pillows under his shoulders and asked him, rather absent-mindedly, how he was feeling, before proceeding to her boudoir.

Waiting her there was a curious individual, sturdy, square-shouldered and well set-up, but dressed in a greenish-black frock coat as shiny as if it were made of umbrella silk. His

face was young, but his energetic and rugged appearance was spoiled by a coarse, wrinkled, almost brick-red skin.

Behind the monocle,

which he used for either side indifferently, his cold and rather mocking eyes spark'ed with a boyish gaiety.

"Mr. Barnett?" she asked.

He bowed and before she could withdraw it he had kissed her hand with a suave flourish.

"Jim Barnett—and your humble servant, Madame la Baronne. On getting your letter I stopped just long enough to brush my coat."

The baronne, a little taken aback, merely said: "I've been told that you are quite clever at disentangling most complicated matters."

He smiled his self-satisfaction. "Yes, I've rather a gift for seeing clearly—understanding, that's to say."

While his voice was soft, his tone was imperious and his whole air suggested discreet irony and persiflage. He seemed so sure of himself and his talents that it was impossible not to share his confidence, and Valérie felt herself swayed by the influence of this unknown detective, this head of a private inquiry agency. Re-senting the feeling, she interrupted him:

"Perhaps we had better—er—discuss terms."

"Quite unnecessary," replied Barnett. "The services of the Barnett Agency, Madame la Baronne, are entirely free."

She looked disappointed, and continued: "I should prefer to arrange some reward, some remuneration."

"A tip?" he sneered.

"I cannot possibly—" she insisted.

"Be under an obligation to me? Don't worry, Madame la

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Baronne, I shall see to it that we end up quits for whatever service I may be able to render you."

Valérie shuddered a little uneasily and changed color. What did he mean? How did this man propose to repay himself? He might even—yes, he was quite possibly an unknown admirer. She wondered what she had better do.

But he had so far dominated her that she submitted willingly to his questioning as to what had caused her to apply to his agency.

"It happened the Sunday before last," she began; "I went to bed rather early and fell asleep as usual. About four o'clock—at ten minutes past, to be exact—a noise woke me and then there was a bang which sounded to me like a door closing. It came from my boudoir—this room we are in, which communicates with my bedroom and also with a corridor leading to the servants' staircase."

"I'm not nervous so I got up after a moment's hesitation and came in here and turned on the light. The room was empty, but this small show-case had fallen down and several of the curios and statuettes in it were broken. I then went to my husband's room and found him reading in bed; he had not heard anything. He was very much upset and rang for the butler, who at once began an investigation which was later continued by the police."

"And the result?" asked Barnett.

"As regards the arrival and departure of the intruder they could find no trace. But under a footstool among the débris of the curios someone found half a candle and an awl set in a very dirty wooden handle. Now on the previous afternoon a plumber had repaired the taps of the wash-stand in my husband's dressing-room. The man's employer when questioned identified the tool, and moreover the other half of the candle was found in his shop, but inquiry proved that the workman took the six o'clock express to Brussels, arriving there at midnight—four hours before the intruder woke me."

"Really? Has the man returned?"

"No. They lost track of him at Antwerp, where he was spending money lavishly."

"Who's been on this inquiry?"

"Inspector Béchoux."

"What! The worthy Béchoux: He's a very good friend of mine; we've often worked together."

"It was he who mentioned your agency."

Barnett crossed to the window and thought hard for a few minutes, whistling under his breath. Then he returned to Madame Assermann and continued:

"You and Béchoux, Madame, conclude that this was an attempted burglary—am I right?"

"Yes—an unsuccessful attempt, since nothing has been taken."

THE detective shrugged his shoulders; then, pointing to one of the silk-draped panels lining the boudoir above the wainscoting, he asked: "What's under that panel?"

"I beg your pardon," she said in a puzzled tone. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that the most superficial investigation reveals the fact that the edges of that rectangle of silk are slightly frayed and here and there are separated from the woodwork by a slit; there is every reason to suppose that a safe is concealed there."

Valérie gave a start. How on earth could the man have guessed from such almost imperceptible indications? Then, with a jerk she slid the panel open, disclosing a small steel door.

At length, taking a key from her pocket, she opened the safe and gave a sigh of satisfaction. There it was—the only object the safe contained—a splendid pearl necklace.

Barnett laughed. "Easier in your mind now, Madame la Baronne? Yes, it's quite a pretty piece of jewelry and I can understand why it's been stolen from you."

"But it's not been stolen," she protested. "Even if the attempt was for this, it failed. Here is the necklace in my hands."

"Here's a necklace," he corrected her quietly; "but are you sure that is *your* necklace and that it has any value?"

"What do you mean?" she asked in a tone of annoyance. "Only a fortnight ago my jeweler valued it at half a million francs."

"A fortnight ago—that is to say, five days before that night . . . And now? Please remember I know nothing; I have not valued the necklace; it is merely a supposition. But are you yourself entirely without suspicion?"

Valérie stood quite still. What suspicion was he hinting at? A vague anxiety crept over her as his suggestion persisted until in the back of her mind the horrible truth began to dawn distinct and threatening.

JIM BARNETT gave vent to a quiet chuckle. "Just so. You're getting there, are you? On the right track at last. One more effort and you'll see daylight. It's all quite logical. Your enemy doesn't steal—he substitutes.

"Nothing disappears and except for the noise of the falling case everything would have been carried out in the darkness and have gone undiscovered.

"Well, that settles the first point. And now we know what he stole, let's look for the thief.

"Cheer up, Madame. We're on the right track. Let's begin by a little guesswork. Let's suppose that your husband, in spite of his illness, had enough strength to drag himself from his own room to this one, armed with the candle and, anyway, with the tool the plumber left behind; suppose he opened the safe, clumsily overturned the show-case and then fled in case you had heard the noise.

"Doesn't that throw light on it all? How naturally it accounts for the absence of any trace of arrival or departure and also for the safe being opened without being forced, since Baron Assermann must many a time have seen you work the lock, noted the clicks and intervals and counted the number of notches displaced—and so, gradually, discovered the three letters of the cipher."

This "little guesswork," as Jim Barnett termed it, seemed to terrify the beautiful Valérie as he revealed the plan step by step. She stammered out distractedly:

"Your suggestion is insane. My husband is incapable of—if someone came here that night, it could not have been he."

"Had you a copy of your necklace?" he interjected.

"Yes. He ordered one, for safety, when we bought it—four years ago."

"And where is the copy?"

"My husband kept it," she replied in a whisper.

Barnett went on: "That's the copy you have in your hands; he has substituted it for the real pearls which he has taken. As for his motive—well, since his fortune places Baron Assermann above any suspicion of theft, we must look for something more intimate. Revenge—a desire to torment, to hurt—perhaps to punish? What do you think?"

"After all, a young and pretty woman's somewhat reckless behavior may be very understandable, but her husband may judge it with some severity . . . Forgive me, baronne. I have no right to pry into the secrets of your private life—I am here merely to locate, with your help, the present hiding-place of your necklace."

"No," cried Valérie, starting back—"no!"

He bowed. "As you wish, Madame—I have not the slightest desire to be importunate. I am here simply to serve you in so far as you want my help."

"I need say no more—except that if you should need me, ring me at the agency between nine and ten any night. I respectfully take my leave, Madame la Baronne."

That evening Valérie summoned Inspector Béchoux, whose continued attendance seemed only natural, and the search began. Nevertheless after a week's persistent search, including several night visits when, owing to the baron's habit of taking sleeping-draughts, he was able to

examine even the bed and the bed fittings, he admitted his discouragement. The necklace could not possibly be in the house.

Then matters were brought to a head by a crisis which came suddenly, though not unexpectedly. One evening the servants summoned her hastily—her husband lay choking and prostrate on a divan near the bathroom door. His distorted features and the anguish in his eyes indicated acute suffering.

Almost paralyzed with fright, Valérie sought to telephone the doctor, but the baron stammered out the words, "Too late. It's—too late." Then, trying to stand up, he gasped out: "A drink."

"There's water here in the decanter."

"No. I want it—from the tap." He fell back, exhausted. She turned the tap on quickly, fetched a glass and filled it, but when she took it to him, he would not drink. There was a long silence except for the sound of the water running in the basin.

He motioned to her and she leaned forward—but, doubtless to prevent the servants hearing, he murmured, "Nearer—nearer." She knelt down with her ear almost touching his lips. He whispered incoherently and she could scarcely so much as guess what the words meant.

"The pearls—the necklace. You shall know before I'm gone. You never loved me—you married me—for my money."

She protested indignantly at his making such a cruel accusation at this solemn moment, but he seized her wrist and repeated in a kind of confused delirium:

"For my money, and your conduct proved it. You have never been a good wife to me—that's why I wanted to punish you—why I'm punishing you now. It's an exquisite joy—it's got to be—and I accept death because the pearls are vanishing away. Can't you hear them falling, dropping away into the torrent? Ah, Valérie, my wife, what a punishment!—the drops that trickle away?"

His strength failed and the servants lifted him to his bed. The doctor came very soon after and two elderly spinster cousins who had been summoned settled themselves in the room and refused to budge. The final paroxysm was a prolonged one. At dawn Baron Assermann died, without uttering another word. At the formal request of the cousins, a seal was put on every lock in the room. Then the long death vigil began . . .

Two days later, after the funeral, the baron's lawyer called and asked to speak to Valérie in private. He looked grave and sorrowful and said at once:

"Madame, I have a most painful duty to perform and I prefer to do it as quickly as possible.

"I hold a will drawn up by Monsieur Assermann twenty years ago, appointing you his sole heiress and residuary legatee. But I must advise you that last month the baron confided to me that he had made another—by which he left his entire fortune to his two cousins.

"After reading it to me, he locked it in that desk. He did not wish it to be read until a week after his death. It may not be unsealed before that date."

Now Valérie realized why a few years before after a series of violent quarrels, her husband had advised her to sell her jewels and purchase a pearl necklace with the money. Disinherited, with no fortune of her own and with an imitation pearl necklace in place of the real one, she was left penniless.

THE day before the seals were to be broken a car pulled up in the Rue Laborde in front of a modest entrance bearing the sign:

THE BARNETT AGENCY

Open from two to three.

Information free.

A lady in deep mourning got out of the car and knocked.

"Come in," called someone inside. She entered. "Who's that?" went on the voice in the back room which was separated from the office by a curtain. She recognized it.

"Baroness Assermann," she replied.

"I beg your pardon, baroness. Please sit down. I am just coming."

While she waited, Valérie examined the office. It was comparatively bare: a table, two old armchairs, empty walls, no files, no trace of any papers. A telephone was the only indication of activity.

Lifting the curtain, Jim Barnett sprang forward, alert and smiling. He wore the same shabby frock coat, the same ready-made and deplorable tie, the same monocle at the end of a black ribbon.

He seized and kissed her gloved hand.

"How do you do, Madame? This is indeed a pleasure. But what's the matter? I see you are in mourning—nothing serious, I hope. Oh, but how absent-minded I am! Of course—Baron Assermann, was it not? So sad. A charming man who loved you so dearly."

Once more Valérie felt disconcerted by this man. With much dignity she recounted what had happened, and although she avoided reprimands against her husband, she repeated what his lawyer had said.

"Ah, yes—quite so," interposed the detective, smiling approval. "Very well. That all fits in admirably. It's quite a pleasure to see how logically this captivating and well-ordered drama is being worked out.

"That wash-stand trick now—there's a find! It's true it's farcical rather than dramatic—but so adroitly worked in. Of course I spotted the dodge at once when you told me about the plumber, and saw the connection between the repairing of the wash-stand and the good baron's plans.

"There we had the whole thing. When he planned the substitution of the false necklace, your husband arranged a good hiding-place for the real pearls: it was essential for his purpose. Merely to deprive you of them and throw them, or cause them to be thrown into the Seine would have been only half a revenge.

"To be complete and on the grand scale he had to keep them close at hand, hidden in a spot at once near and inaccessible."

JIM BARNETT was thoroughly enjoying himself and went on jocularly: "Can't you imagine the dialog between the plumber and the banker? 'See here, my man, just examine that waste-pipe under my wash-stand. It goes down to the wainscoting and leaves my bathroom at an almost imperceptible gradient, doesn't it?'

"Well, reduce that gradient still more; take up the pipe in this dark corner, so as to form a sort of pocket—a blind alley—where something could be lodged if necessary; when the tap is turned on the water will fill the pocket and carry away the object lodged there."

"Then drill a hole about half an inch across in the wall side of the pipe, where it won't be noticed. Yes, there. Done it? Now plug it up with this rubber stopper. Does it fit? That's all right then."

"Now, it's quite understood, isn't it—not a word to anyone. Silence. Take this and catch the Brussels express tonight. These three checks you can cash there—one every month."

"And that very night you hear a noise in your boudoir, the imitation pearls are substituted for the real ones and the latter secreted in the hiding-place prepared for them in the pocket of the pipe. Now do you see?"

"Believing that the end has come, the baron calls out to you: 'A glass of water—not from the decanter—from the tap there.' You obey. And the terrible punishment is brought about by your own hand as it turns the tap—the water runs, carries away the pearls, and the baron stammers out, 'Can't you hear them falling, dropping away into the torrent?'"

The baroness listened in distracted silence. What impressed her most in Barnett's terrible story was not the full revelation of her husband's rancor and hatred, but the one fact which it hammered true.

"Then you knew the truth?" she murmured at last. "And you said nothing of this to me?"

"But my dear Madame, it was you yourself

who stopped me from telling you what I knew or was just about to discover. You dismissed me—somewhat rudely, I fear—and not wishing to be officious, I did not press the matter. Besides, I had still to verify my deductions."

"And have you done so?" she faltered.

"Yes—just out of curiosity, that's all."

"When?"

"The same night."

"What! You got into our house that night—into our rooms? I heard nothing."

"Oh, I've little way of working without noise—even Baron Assermann didn't hear me. And yet—Well, just to make sure, I enlarged that hole, you see—the one through which he had pushed the pearls into the pipe."

She started. "Then you saw them? My pearls were actually there in the pipe and you could have taken them?"

"Yes," he admitted nonchalantly, "and I really believe that but for me, Jim Barnett, they would have dropped away as the baron intended they should on the day of his death, which he knew was not far off—and his plan of revenge would have come off. Too bad. Such a beautiful necklace!"

Valérie was worked up to such a pitch that she rushed up to Barnett and convulsively seized the collar of his coat.

"It's theft! You're a common adventurer—I suspected it all along—a crook!"

At the word "crook" the young man hooted with joy. "I—a crook? How charming!"

She took no notice. Shaking with passion, she rushed up and down the room shrieking: "I won't have it, I tell you. Give me back my pearls at once or I'll call the police!"

"They are here at your disposal. Good heavens, do you suppose that Jim Barnett robs the people who pay him the compliment of seeking his help? Here, my dear Madame la Baronne, is your necklace."

He produced a small cloth bag containing the rescued pearls and put it on the table.

Thunderstruck, Valérie seized the precious necklace with shaking hands, and with a sudden fear that he was acting on a momentary impulse, she abruptly made for the door.

"You're in a hurry all at once," laughed Jim Barnett. "Aren't you going to count them? Three hundred and forty-five. They're all there—and they're the real ones, this time."

"Yes," said Valérie. "I know that."

"You're quite sure? These really are the pearls your jeweler valued at five hundred thousand francs?"

"Yes—these are the ones."

"In that case, I'll buy them from you."

"You'll buy them! What do you mean?"

"Well, being penniless, you've got to sell them. Why not to me, then, since I can offer you more than anyone else will? I'll give you twenty times their value. Instead of five hundred thousand francs, I'll give ten million. Does that startle you?"

"Ten million!"

"Exactly the reported amount of the baron's estate."

VALÉRIE stopped at the door, her fingers twisted around the knob. "My husband's estate," she repeated. "I don't see any connection. Please explain."

With gentle emphasis Jim Barnett continued: "It's very simple. You have your choice—the pearl necklace or the estate!"

"The pearl necklace—the estate?" she repeated, puzzled.

"Certainly. As you yourself told me, the inheritance turns on two wills, the earlier one in your favor and the second in favor of those two old cousins who are as rich as Croesus and apparently a pair of skinflints. But suppose will number two can't be found, will number one is valid."

"But tomorrow," she said in a faltering tone, "they intend to break the seals and open the desk—and the second will is there."

"The will may be there—or it may not," suggested Barnett rather contemptuously. "I'll go so far as to say that in my humble opinion it is not."

"Is that possible?" she asked, staring at him in amazement.

"Quite possible—even probable. In fact I seem to remember that when I came to investigate the wash-stand pipe the evening after our talk, I took the opportunity of looking around your husband's rooms as he was sleeping so soundly."

"And you took that will?" she asked.

"This scrawl looks like it, doesn't it?"

He unfolded a sheet of stamped paper and she recognized her husband's writing as she caught sight of the words: "I, the undersigned, Leon Joseph Assermann, banker, in view of certain facts well known to her, do hereby declare that my wife Valérie Assermann shall not have the slightest claim upon my fortune—"

She read no further. Her voice caught in her throat, and she gasped: "You stole that paper—and expect me to be your accomplice! I won't. My poor husband's wishes will have to be obeyed."

Jim Barnett threw up his hands enthusiastically. "How splendid of you, dear lady. Duty lies in self-sacrifice and I commend you the more when your lot is so especially hard—when for two old cousins who are quite undeserving of pity, you are prepared to sacrifice yourself with your own hands to gratify Baron Assermann's petty spite. The beautiful Valérie is to forego the luxury to which she is entitled and be reduced to abject poverty."

"But before you finally make this choice, Madame, I beg you to weigh your decision carefully and realize all it means. Let me be quite plain: If that necklace leaves this room the lawyer receives will number two tomorrow morning and you are disinherited."

"And if it stays?"

"Well, there's no will in that desk and you inherit the whole estate—ten million francs in your pocket, thanks to Jim Barnett."

His mockery was brutal—and Valérie felt like a crushed and strangled animal in his diabolical grasp. There was no way out. If she refused him the necklace, the will would be made public. He was relentless and would turn a deaf ear to any entreaties.

He stepped into the back room for a moment—and then returned, calmly wiping from his face the cold-cream with which he had covered it—like an actor removing his make-up. His appearance was completely changed—his face was fresh and young-looking with a healthy complexion. A fashionable tie replaced the ready-made atrocity. He had exchanged the old shiny frock coat for a well-cut business suit.

Valérie knew he would never say a word to anyone, even to Inspector Béchoux—the secret would be kept inviolate.

He leaned toward her, laughing, and said: "Well, I believe you're seeing it all more clearly. That's good! Besides, who'll know that the wealthy Madame Assermann is wearing imitation pearls? Not one of your friends will ever suspect it. You'll keep your fortune and possess a necklace which everyone will think is genuine. Isn't that splendid? Don't you see yourself leading a happy, smiling, busy life, with plenty of chances for some gaiety and flirtations with handsome young men?"

At the moment Valérie had not the slightest desire for gaiety or flirtation. She glared at Jim Barnett with furious hatred and standing very erect she made her exit like a great lady extricating herself from a hostile drawing room.

The bag of pearls remained on the table.

"And they call that an honest woman!" said Jim Barnett to himself, his arms folded in virtuous indignation. "Her husband disinherits her to punish her for her pranks—and she disregards his wishes! There's a recent will—and she filches it! She cheats his lawyer, despoils his old cousins. Tut, tut! And how noble is the part of the lover of justice who chastises the culprit and sets everything back in order again!"

He slipped the necklace deftly back into his pocket, and then, with his monocle carefully adjusted, he left the Barnett Agency.

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Fels-Napth
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Up goes the curtain on a really clean movie!

THE VILLAIN**THE HEROINE****THE HERO****TIME: any washday****DIRT****YOU****GOLDEN SOAP AND NAPTHA (working together)****PLACE: your laundry**

You'll find the Scenario is short.

**DIRT, the VILLAIN, is hiding in your wash.
YOU must drive him out!**



**YOU roll up your sleeves—prepare for
a struggle . . .**



**But wait! Here is extra help! FELS-NAPTHA
—good soap and plenty of naptha, working
together. He enters your wash . . .**



**And out comes DIRT. For DIRT is afraid of
FELS-NAPTHA. You are saved—saved the
work of hard rubbing!**



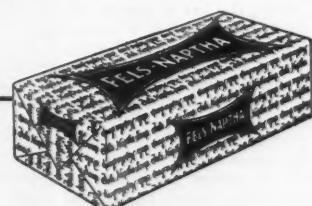
or hot water, or, if you choose, boil your clothes. Fels-Naptha washes everything washable, light or heavy. It gets your clothes clean with less effort on your part. Its mild, pleasant suds are kind to your hands. And you can use it all over the house—from keeping window panes sparkling to cleaning the painted wood-work.

Your grocer sells a lot of Fels-Naptha. Get some from him today, and learn for yourself that "nothing takes the place of Fels-Naptha."

FELS & CO., Philadelphia

FELS-NAPTHA

**THE GOLDEN BAR
WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR**



THIS little movie is true. Dirt is afraid of Fels-Naptha! Fels-Naptha does do away with hard rubbing! For Fels-Naptha brings you two effective cleaners working together—good golden soap blended, by the exclusive Fels-Naptha process, with plenty of naptha.

With Fels-Naptha, you can smell the naptha in every bar. And you know that naptha, the basis of "dry cleaning," is a marvelous cleaner. It dissolves grease. It loosens stubborn dirt. In Fels-Naptha it works hand-in-hand with the soap. The safe, sure action of the naptha loosens the dirt and the rich soapy suds wash your clothes clean, white and sweet.

Make Fels-Naptha your extra helper—and use it *your way*. Use in washing machine or tub—cool, lukewarm

Money or Her Life by Royal Brown (Continued from page 79)

began her thought—but was checked. This was no time to think of Jimmy. Or to wonder what he would think when she turned up missing.

The Twentieth Century bore her eastward that noon, a drawing-room and compartment having been secured. Eileen shared the compartment with the elderly maid.

As the Twentieth Century coursed on through the night Eileen slept only intermittently. This was excitement—the cream of life.

"It ought to be like that millionaire-for-a-day stuff," she mused contentedly.

But it was not to turn out just that way. At a little after noon the next day her new life began. Only a glimpse of Boston and scarcely more of the house whose roof now sheltered her had been vouchsafed her. She had, naturally, expected magnificence. Yet what she had glimpsed as she had been conducted up the stairs was oddly reminiscent of the lodging-house in which she had roomed when she first came to Chicago. A high-studded, narrow hall, a steep stairway, an atmosphere of ancient stiffness and general depression of spirit.

THE room she occupied, which had obviously been the mysterious Sally's, was not so bad. It was beautifully furnished. But—the door was locked. From the outside.

"You will stay here," her pseudo-grandmother had informed her curiously, "and neither ask questions nor answer them." Whereupon the strange old woman—Eileen trusted she wasn't crazy—had departed, locking the door. "And what do you know about that?" Eileen had gasped as the key had clicked.

For a second she had stood at a loss. Then it occurred to her to remove her hat and coat. The latter provided immediate diversion as she held it at arm's length and let her eyes adore it.

Presently a key clicked in the lock. The elderly maid appeared, followed by a butler carrying a tray, with luncheon for one.

"Oh, well, I'm housed, clothed and fed anyway," ruminated Eileen philosophically as she ate of what had been prepared for her. "I hope, though, I get taken out for an airing now and then—if only on a leash."

The butler, returning for the tray, had a message for her.

"Madam requests you to be ready at four to go calling with her," he announced.

"The plot thickens," commented Eileen—but not aloud. "It looks as if I were going to meet Boston's best highbrows. I wonder if I'm going to keep on being sulky—and dumb. I guess I'd better or I'll spill the beans."

At three the maid appeared. "Have you bathed?" she asked primly.

"I haven't even washed behind my ears," retorted Eileen, forgetting her rôle for an instant.

The car—the same one that had brought her from the station—was waiting outside. In it Eileen and Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter set forth. Presently the car stopped.

Eileen glanced inquiringly at the inflexible profile of her companion. The latter did not move. But the chauffeur disengaged himself from behind the wheel, stiffly mounted stone steps and rang bell. When a maid appeared he touched his hat, handed her cards and returned to set the car in motion again. This performance was repeated a dozen times.

"Well, if this is the social whirl," gasped Eileen, "you can give me a merry-go-round. You can at least make grab at the brass ring."

Long before six she was back again "in solitary."

"Is there anything you wish?" the chill, aloof old terror had asked her.

"Well, a newspaper might help break up the monotony a bit," Eileen had replied briefly.

"I'll see that you get it," she had been assured.

It came with dinner and Eileen promptly propped it up against the sugar bowl.

She saw as she glanced almost incredulously at it that there were no pictures on its first

page. The heaviest type emphasis was held within a single column and was devoted to something Congress might or might not do with regard to certain legislation, all of which was nothing in Eileen's young life. The rest of the first page was devoid of interest.

"Everybody knocks Chicago, but something happens there anyway," thought Eileen. "If this is Boston—good night!" And she tossed the paper aside.

Yet, finished with dinner, she turned back to it in pure desperation. It couldn't be as dead as it looked. And there were, she discovered, pictures inside. The one that held her interest longest was of four deb who, it appeared, were graciously helping make some charity bazaar a success.

"They may go big at a charity bazaar in Boston," mused Eileen, unimpressed, "but they certainly wouldn't need the reserves to protect them from the rush at any dance I ever went to in Chicago!"

Beneath the picture was a column bearing the legend "Society." She started to read this, seeking to discover what this society she had called upon this afternoon, but was yet to see, might be like.

Then swiftly her interest focused.

Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter, (she read), has returned home from Chicago where she went last Tuesday to bring back her granddaughter, the charming and popular Sally Thaxter who has been visiting friends there. Mrs. Thaxter and her granddaughter are to sail for Europe within a few days for an extended stay there.

Europe! Eileen caught her breath. Did it mean that she, Eileen, was to travel? That was one of the things she had always wanted most. The very word *travel* suggested life to her. It filled her with visions of the things she craved nebulously, yet so poignantly as to deafen her ears to all Jimmy's pleadings.

"I don't want to stick in one place all my life," she had told him. "I want to see the world."

"Looking for a millionaire?" he had jeered.

"Just give me a chance at one—or his million, anyway," she had retorted calmly.

Now, for a second, the vision seemed close. Perhaps she was to be adopted and—But there she checked herself.

"She wouldn't take you," she informed herself firmly. "Or even if she did she'd probably keep you locked up in a cabin."

She let the paper slip to the floor and glanced at her wrist watch. The Christmas present from Jimmy that she had told him she could not accept, but had. It assured her it was not yet eight o'clock.

Yawning like a bored kitten, she rose and moved around the room. She inspected the frocks hanging in the closet—loads of them—and then opened bureau drawers to see what might be in them. Lingerie mostly. After that she turned to the writing-desk. In the cubby-holes were letters which she virtuously refrained from reading though she would have liked to, mightily. But when she found a frayed clipping she saw no reason why she shouldn't look that over. And so:

One of the most exclusive and inflexible upholders of the *ancien régime* in Boston, whose august presence only the ultra elect may enter without fear and trembling, is due to suffer severe shock ere long, we fear (she read). The personage in question, rich in years but far from her dotage, has a charming, if wilful granddaughter to whom she looks to carry on the family glory. The granddaughter, whose parents died some years ago, is now being prepared for her débüt in a school outside Philadelphia.

So far so good. But hark! Almost daily the damsel, a keen devotee of riding, canters forth to the most romantic of trysts. These are quite *sub rosa*, naturally,

for her Romeo elect is but a groom on a neighboring estate. 'Tis said that he was gallant in war as well as in love and is the possessor of a D. S. O. An Englishman, we gather, and a personable one. Older than our little sub-deb in years and experience, and having come to our shores to seek his fortune, hopeful perhaps that he has found it.

But alas, in America as well as in England, rank is the guinea's stamp and though a man may be a man, for all he's a groom, he cannot either here or there be considered a desirable *parti*. This being so, we predict that some day soon the grandmother, who holds the purse-strings, will awake to what is happening and will descend like a blight upon the budding romance.

Did the clipping refer to the missing, mysterious Sally? Eileen wondered. If so, had she eloped with the groom?

"I'll bet she did—or is going to," she decided. "That's why her grandmother had detectives on her trail. But then why did she stop searching and bring me back instead?" This puzzled her for a second. And then she caught her breath. "She wouldn't—couldn't dream that she'd have a chance of getting away with anything like that!"

Yet here was she, Eileen, being used deliberately to impersonate the missing Sally. "That's why she's keeping me locked up," her thoughts raced on, at another tangent. "And why I'm not to speak to anybody . . . But she can't keep me locked up forever."

Then she remembered what she had read about Europe. "For an extended stay there" the newspaper had said.

It all fitted together, anyway. Her own identity had been stripped from her as completely as her clothes. The paper had announced that Sally Thaxter had returned from Chicago. Besides which, she, as Sally Thaxter, had called, if only vicariously, on her grandmother's friends that afternoon.

"Gosh, how that woman must be able to hate!" mused Eileen, thinking of her pseudo-grandmother and wondering what the abandoned Sally would say to all this. Then, swiftly, her thoughts took a further leap. The real Sally would probably be disinherited. If so—gosh! "I may be going crazy myself," she assured herself, "but if this is my chance at a million—lead me to it!"

The more she thought of it—and it was after two when she finally fell asleep—the more possible it seemed somehow.

BRACKFAST, served at eight, broke her slumbers. The visions of the night before began to lack credibility and the morning dragged interminably. At luncheon, however, she was informed that Madam was taking her to the Symphony rehearsal that afternoon. She quickened at that. Music. That was another of the gifts Eileen craved from life. But would she really hear it?

"It would be just like her to have the chauffeur leave the tickets at the door and come home," she reminded herself.

Nothing like that happened, however. Eileen sat surrounded by music lovers that afternoon, digesting a new discovery. And that is that *real* music, like olives, requires a taste that must be acquired. A little of it will, until then, go a long way.

"I'd rather hear Jimmy play his old *uke*," she confessed frankly to herself.

Of many curious glances cast toward her she was conscious. And when the rehearsal was over, a girl rushed up to her.

"Oh, Sally—why didn't you stick it out?" she was asked, in an impetuous whisper.

There was no chance for Eileen to answer. But her mind returned to the riddle. In the limousine once more she stole a glance at the rigid old woman beside her but found no

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In the booklet wrapped around every cake of Woodbury's—you will find the right treatment for your skin

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If you are troubled with blackheads, blemishes, excessive oiliness, or any other skin defect—use the special treatment recommended for that trouble in the booklet that comes to you free with every cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap.

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NOW THE LARGE-SIZE TRIAL SET!

The Andrew Jergens Co.,
1609 Alford Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.
For the enclosed 10 cents please send me
the new large-size trial cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap, the Cold Cream,
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booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," and instructions for the new
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"Who Can Resist It?—The Charm of a Beautiful Skin"

answer there. "Supposing the real granddaughter should show up?" conjectured Eileen suddenly. "Gosh, what a mix-up."

Afterwards, she considered that had been a perfect premonition. The moment they entered the house she guessed that exactly that had happened. The butler, opening the door, had lost some of his wooden imperturbability. His mistress gave him a swift glance that silenced him.

"Go to your room," she commanded sharply to Eileen.

Eileen started obediently up the stairs. But as she made the turn at the top she heard the hard, imperious voice demand:

"Well, where is she?"

"In the drawing-room, Madam."

"And little Eileen is on her way out," supplemented Eileen. "Good-by million."

EVEN so, the next move was not yet up to her. And so, back in the room that was hers, yet was not, she marked time. Until she realized that the door, not locked, was opening.

"Can I come in?" asked a gay voice. "I—" The owner of the voice stopped short to stare wide-eyed. "My heavens," she breathed. "We are regular Siamese twins, aren't we? It's uncanny—like looking in a mirror."

It was; Eileen's eyes were as wide. So this was the real Sally.

"Gosh!" Sally was saying. "I believe grandmother could have got away with it at that. I couldn't resist the temptation to sneak up and take a look at you when she told me that I could not be her granddaughter—that any of the servants would tell me that her granddaughter was in her room—"

"You don't mean to say," began Eileen, "that she—"

"Gave me the cold and fishy stare? She sure did. Oh, I could call her bluff if I wanted to—but I don't. It's not worth it. I'd have to give up Gerry—and I won't!"

"Gerry?" asked Eileen uncertainly.

"I've married him and believe me I'm going to stay married," announced Sally blissfully. "No annulments for me! Of course if you want to believe what grandmother says—that he's just a rotter who is after her money—"

"I don't think any such thing," protested Eileen. "I just—"

"Of course," Sally went on, ignoring the interruption, "he was—well, just a groom when I met him but that was because he was English and the war busted him and he'd never been trained to earn his living. And he is positively fascinating. I was crazy about him from the first. Fixed it up so we met a lot. Just so it would seem an accident, you know."

Eileen did know. For all that she had snubbed her Jimmy there had been times, at first, when she had used the same device.

"I guess I was pretty indiscreet," Sally confessed. "Because one of those terrible society papers printed something pretty awful. Grandmother saw it and hit the roof. She rushed me off to Europe to forget him. But I didn't. I wrote him the day I got back—and asked him to marry me—"

"Not really!" gasped Eileen.

"Why not? I knew he'd never ask *me!* He's too proud and sensitive, considered himself a washout and all that. So I asked him and—see what the stuffed prune answered!"

From her hand-bag she drew out a letter.

Dear Miss Sally: (Eileen read)

I am honored by your trust and confidence. I know you feel yourself sincere. But you are very young and, if I may say so, romantic, too. I suspect that my very evident plight warmed chivalrous sympathy in you and that your letter may be accepted as evidence of that. For it I thank you and believe me, always

Faithfully and gratefully your friend
Fitzgerald Decourcy Lynnescott Smythe

"That made me so darned mad—after I'd simply hurled myself at him," commented Sally, "I made up my mind to forget him. I tried to, too. But when I came face to face

with him in Chicago—that was two weeks ago today—the dam busted. I just took him in hand firmly, and it was about time. Just think, he might have been hi-jacked or machine gunned any minute."

"Machine gunned?" echoed Eileen.

"The priceless idiot was in with a gang of rum runners," explained Sally. "You see he did love me terribly and was desperate and wanted to make money quick. And in Chicago he'd fallen in with a man he'd known in England who was making big money and Gerry didn't care much what happened—but I did. I married him that afternoon and—here I am. I thought I ought to give grandmother a chance to be a sport if she wanted to be. But she plainly doesn't—which is that. See?"

"I see," acknowledged Eileen. And added, "Is—is your husband here?"

"No, he's counting the minutes—or he'd better be—until I get back to Chicago. He's got to work for a living, you see. We discussed all that. He already had a car and I told him to keep right on driving. Not for rum runners but something like a taxi. Only without a meter and more for—"

"Why—why, that's what my Jimmy does?"

This was the first time she had ever called Jimmy *her* Jimmy but she did not notice that.

"Truly? Isn't it the most exciting thing—working that way?" panted Sally. "Gerry tells me about all his passengers and everything. And we've got the dickest three-room apartment. Of course, it's tiny—but I love it to pieces. It's really living!"

"Living?" echoed Eileen, wide-eyed. "You mean—more than this?" She glanced around the exquisitely furnished room as she spoke.

"This!" scorned Sally. "Say, you don't call this living, do you? Why, I feel as if I'd escaped from Sing Sing. I—"

"I don't mean just this room—or the house," protested Eileen. "I mean the gorgeous times you must have had. The people you know—and the music and travel."

"Bunk!" exploded Sally. "Gorgeous times—Egypt's Queen! I suppose you mean teas and dinners and dances. Same old crowds, same old faces, same old jokes. Travel? The really interesting places are always places where they haven't a good hotel or where no Thaxter would be seen. And the people you'd like to meet because they look interesting are never in the Blue Book, somehow. All right in their way, but not *our* sort, you know. I've been to Europe three times and I don't care if I *never* go again. I'd rather go to a place in northern Michigan Gerry told me about."

She took a deep breath, her eyes starry. "It's going to be our honeymoon," she explained. "We'll take the car and camp out nights. And fish and wear old clothes. Do anything we feel like with no set schedule—"

"I'll bet most girls would prefer Europe, just the same," Eileen broke in, at that point. "I would. All my life I've hoped—"

"Well, now's your chance," Sally reminded her. "Oh, yes, it is. As far as grandmother is concerned you're Sally Thaxter right now. Of course that's crazy, but go to it—I won't gum up the game. I've got Gerry. But—you'll have to give up that Jimmy you were talking about."

"Your grandmother would never really do it," protested Eileen.

"You don't know grandmother yet," retorted Sally grimly. "I don't know how she'll manage it, but she will. She almost had me believing I was crazy. I think she always has hated me a little—she never liked my mother—and now she hates me terribly. And wants to punish me. As if she could by just cutting me off! What good is money when it just keeps you from doing things? I want to live—really live. I want some excitement."

"Excitement!" repeated Eileen. "You don't mean to say there's more excitement living in a three-room flat and—being poor?"

"Take it from me there is," retorted Sally. "Oh, of course I could use some money. But you can't have everything. I've got Gerry and—what are you putting your hat on for?"

Eileen did not answer for a second. A wave of pure nostalgia possessed her. For Chicago! Then: "I guess," she announced recklessly, "we're twins both sides the skin. It begins to sound to me as if—"

"You mean—you're going back to your Jimmy?" cut in Sally joyously.

"I'm going back to Chicago *anyway*," corrected Eileen. "If, that is, your grandmother will come across with the return fare and let me wear the clothes I've got on."

"She will do more than that—that's the Thaxter of it," prophesied Sally. "It will be an awful blow to her, but she'd be boiled in oil before she'd lift a finger to stop you. She may even take your breath away. I know her like a book."

And Sally did. Eileen was still breathless as the train, bearing them westward, tore on through the night.

"I don't feel as if I ought to have let her give me the coat and all the other things she bought me, besides the check," she told Sally.

"They're no use to her," Sally reminded her. "I should worry if I were you. You can have them for a trousseau and you do look perfectly ducky in that coat. If your Jimmy doesn't love you in it—"

"He'll be more apt to demand where I got it," amended Eileen and though she smiled, it was a shade uncertain. The thought of Jimmy filled her with a curious shyness. "I was last seen departing in company with a gentleman of whom he disapproved," she added. "He—he may be quite masculine—"

"Lovely!" breathed Sally. "How you can make him grovel in the dust when you explain!"

"He—he may not even bother to come around for explanations," suggested Eileen, almost wistfully. "He—he was awful mad at me the last time I saw him—and is probably madder than ever by now."

To which Jimmy would certainly have appended a curt "Correct."

"That's the last time she gets a chance to walk all over me," he had assured himself with great vehemence after their last quarrel.

He had held to that determination through forty-eight hours. Then, in spite of his pride, which informed him that he was a backboneless worm, he had felt himself inexorably drawn into a public pay station from which he had called Eileen's home number and had asked for her.

"Miss Ridgeway? Oh, she's gone away somewhere," he was informed. "No, she didn't leave any address. Just sent a man around—a porter from some hotel it was—with some of her clothes. She said she'd be gone a month perhaps."

To Jimmy it had seemed as if the booth was pressing in around him trying to suffocate him. He had stood there simply stunned. Then, craving air, he had automatically achieved it. Eventually his brain had cleared.

"If that human wart had anything to do with her disappearance," he informed himself, with deadened grimness, "he'll need something more than a couple of his machine guns to save his neck when I get my hands on him."

Second, sobered thought had amended the conclusion that primitive impulse was based on, however.

"He couldn't have put anything over on her," he had reminded himself miserably. "She must have married him—eloped."

And even if she hadn't—well, he was through with her anyway. Absolutely. He wouldn't forgive her now if she got down on her knees to him. This was all in his mind, working like yeast, when a mysterious wire was delivered to him. This read:

Please meet train from Boston arriving La Salle Street Station at seven-thirty-tonight. Have heard you highly recommended as careful and conscientious driver and may be able to throw considerable employment your way.

It had been signed simply Sarah Ames Thaxter. It was, therefore, for Sarah Ames Thaxter, age uncertain and appearance a

The Wife of the Pretender to the throne of France

*On the art of
CULTIVATING
BEAUTY*



The Duchesse de Guise has shining chestnut hair, amber eyes, and perfect features made vivid and radiant by the loveliness of her skin, smooth as magnolia petals . . . La Duchesse was born at Chateau d'Eu (above)—domain of the Guise family for many generations



Isabelle, Duchesse de Guise

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"Every Frenchwoman," she declares, "instinctively delights in the art and wisdom of cultivating beauty, in performing all those little rites which keep her loveliest."

"I am delighted to find Pond's Two Creams. Delicate and delicious, they keep the skin fresh and vigorous."

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These Two Creams, chosen by women of distinction, used with Pond's new Skin Freshener and Cleansing Tissues

they afford a delightful new Pond's way of caring for the skin!

FIRST, cleanse to the very depths of your pores, with Pond's Cold Cream.

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THIRD, pat Pond's Skin Freshener briskly over your face and neck for several minutes. Firmed, toned, invigorated, your cheeks are all aglow, your skin is lifted like magic—and your spirits, too!

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This Pipe Smoker Has a "Kick" All His Own

When a real man has been wrong about something, he admits it. Here's Mr. Bayer, for example. He once thought he couldn't smoke a pipe. He had experimented with about all the pipes and all the tobacco on the market. But it took a trip to Canada, and a can of Edgeworth, to convince him that with the right tobacco, pipe-smoking is a joy forever. Let Mr. Bayer tell you about it:

St. Paul, Minn.
June 1, 1927

Larus & Bro. Co.,
Richmond, Va.

Gentlemen:

About five years ago, after trying out many different styles of pipes from the Missouri meerschaum to the genuine meerschaum, including the upside-down style made popular by Vice-President Dawes, and experimenting with just about all the tobaccos then on the market *except* Edgeworth, I finally decided that pipe-smoking was not for me.

For the last year or so I noticed the boys around the office here using Edgeworth to the exclusion of all other tobaccos and evidently getting real pleasure from their pipes.

In April of this year I was in Canada on a business trip and decided to take another whirl at pipe-smoking. So I invested a good share of my savings in a pipe and a few cents additional for a can of Edgeworth.

From then on I have been figuratively kicking myself around the block about once each day when I think of the five lean years I put in trying to get along without a pipe. However, I am trying to make up for lost time and am succeeding quite well. Why I failed to try Edgeworth long ago will have to go down in history as an unsolved question. But now that I have found it, the years ahead look rosy to me.

Very truly yours,
Ben Bayer.

Many men have stopped envying pipe smokers and joined the happy throng themselves. It wasn't high-priced tobacco, that made pipe smokers of them. It wasn't a different pipe. It was nothing else but good old Edgeworth. To those who have never tried Edgeworth, we make this offer:

Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the pipe test. If you like the samples, you'll like Edgeworth wherever and whenever you buy it, for it never changes in quality.

Write your name and address to
Larus & Brother

Company, 4 S. 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

Edgeworth is sold everywhere in various sizes to suit the needs and means of all purchasers. Both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed are packed in small, pocket-size packages, in handsome humidores holding a pound, and also in several handy in-between sizes.

[On your radio—tune in on WRVA, Richmond, Va.—the Edgeworth Station. Wave length 254.1 meters. Frequency 1180 kilocycles.]



nebulously, that Jimmy's eyes—grim eyes they were—searched as the train pulled in.

"It will be a perfect scream," Sally was assuring Eileen. "Remember, you are to point out Jimmy and I'll point out Gerry. Then I'll go to Jimmy and you go to Gerry—only don't you dare let him kiss you."

So Sally had planned it. Nor was that all Sally had planned.

"You don't know how much I envy you," she said to Eileen wistfully, as they neared Chicago. "You've had such an interesting life. Always your own boss, able to do what you want to, earning your own way. I—will you let me be bridesmaid at your wedding?"

"I'd love it—nothing more—if if there is a wedding," murmured Eileen, deeply touched. "You forget that Jimmy may have changed his mind. I deserve that."

Sally looked her over. "Don't be a silly!" she commanded. "Because he'll change it back quick enough the minute he sees you. You are a peach—even if I say so as shouldn't. I wish you'd adopt me as a twin. It would be so wonderful, going around with you that way. And I know your Jimmy and my Gerry are going to be great friends, I—"

She paused, obviously struck by an idea.

"Why couldn't they be partners?" she asked excitedly. "Listen—I've got a little money of my own. Not much—only about thirty thousand. But I haven't even dared mention it to Gerry because he's so sensitive about anything to do with money. But couldn't we get together, you and I, and sort of work it around so that they could start a taxi company of their own?"

"Oh—but you see Jimmy has nothing like that to put in," protested Eileen.

The train was pulling into the station now.

"We'll fix that up," Sally assured her. "Your Jimmy has much more experience anyway, you see, and—oh I'm sure it's going to be wonderful. Don't speak of it just yet. But you have my phone number and—"

The train checked itself and so did Sally.

"Remember," she said quickly, "you point out Jimmy and I'll point out Gerry and—we'll fool them both."

And so they might have, except that Sally, instead of pointing out Gerry, went to him as straight as a homing pigeon to its loft the moment she caught sight of him.

"Oh, Gerry," she all sobbed, her arms around his neck. "Do you still love me?"

"Love you?" he exploded.

"Even if I'm disinherited—disowned?"

"You're not disowned—I own you," he reminded her sternly.

Eileen was quite forgotten. But then Eileen had temporarily forgotten Sally, too, the moment she had seen Jimmy.

Week-end

(Continued from page 89)

old man, probably placed there by his own disposition, somehow retained the advantage.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Jumbo, and there was courtesy and breeding in his voice. "I knew your grandfather. He was an older man than I but I remember him well. I had a great respect for him."

"Jumbo, I never knew you respected anything," interrupted Judy. "I thought that was where I got it."

The old man chuckled. "You've improved on me, my dear. You began earlier. I sloughed off respect. You were born without it."

"I prefer almost any other emotion," said Judy.

"I think that's a pose," said Warwick bluntly.

The old man's eyes glimmered from one to the other. "No, Warwick. You're wrong about that. Judy doesn't pose. She hasn't that talent."

Someone announced dinner at just the moment when the glasses were again empty and the Filipino boy came in to help old Jumbo to his room where Warwick gathered that he

She sped toward him. "Oh, Jimmy!" she breathed, as she caught sight of his face. "Did you miss me that much?"

They had already slipped into each other's arms.

"Miss you!" he breathed. He paused and choked. Then: "Where's that guy you skipped off with?" he demanded fiercely.

"What on earth are you talking about?" she demanded. And then, realizing what was in his mind, she added, "Why, Jimmy Sturgis! do you mean to say you thought that—"

"Of course not," he lied quickly. "I—I just didn't know what had become of you and—the last thing I knew you were going off with him and—"

"He got fresh and I gave him the gate," announced Eileen, very virtuously. "And—oh, I've a million things to tell you. You won't believe half of them but—you've got your car, haven't you?"

Jimmy, with never a thought of Sarah Ames Thaxter, assured her he had.

Seated beside him, Eileen was silent for a second as her contented eyes drank in Chicago. It splashed by, iridescent, colorful, teeming with the life and movement she loved. And—Jimmy!

She drew a deep breath and then impulsively thrust her left hand under her arm. "I guess it's true," she murmured. "Home is where the heart is."

"Do—do you mean that?" he asked chokingly. "I guess when I tell you where I've been and what I've passed up you'll say I do," she replied, and she told him.

"You—you mean to say you passed up a chance for a million?" he gasped incredulously.

"Well, her own granddaughter did," Eileen reminded him. "All for a little three-room apartment." She glanced at him, misty-eyed. "Do—do you know of any nice little three-room apartments?" she asked.

"Do I?" he retorted. "There's one I've ached to show you. It's—"

"Let's go see it," she suggested impulsively. Their eyes met and their lips, as he stole a swift, audacious kiss.

"Gracious!" gasped Eileen. "Didn't you see that traffic cop signal stop?"

"Did he?" replied Jimmy. Unperturbed, he drew a prodigious breath and added, "I'd like to see anybody try to stop me now!"

Eileen did not answer him—but her eyes did. They were filled with the exquisite realization of the vision of life that Sally had given her. She had had her chance at a million and been shrewd enough to glimpse the truth—which is that some things are even bigger than a million.

For excitement is ever the cream of life and Eileen, challenging the real adventure, was lapping it up once more.

Hearst

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"It was the happiest moment of my life!"

Kansas City, Mo.

A BATHING BEAUTY CONTEST was held in our city, the winner to receive the title, 'Miss Kansas City.'

"I was run down and under weight. My digestion was bad and I was very nervous—probably due to poor elimination. My physician advised fresh Yeast. I ate it—3 cakes a day, dissolved in water. In two weeks my elimination and digestion were better, my nerves had quieted and my weight had righted itself. My complexion cleared up too. I felt fine.

"Well, I won over 200 girls, receiving the

unanimous vote of the judges for beauty of face and form. *It was the happiest moment of my life.*

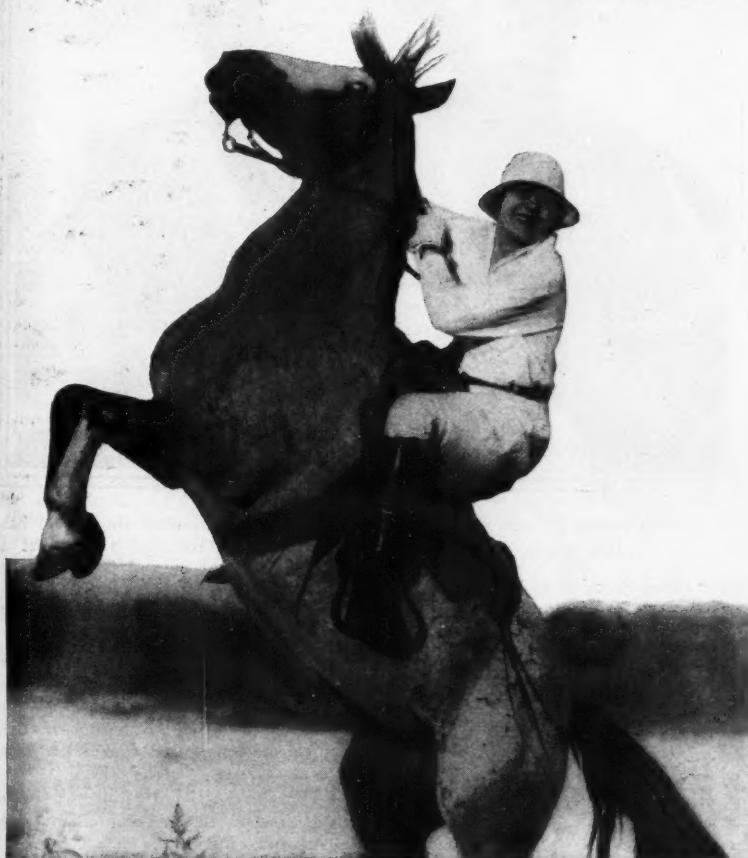
"I then went to Atlantic City, to represent Kansas City in the National Bathing Beauty Contest. I arrived with the required weight, a complexion the judges termed 'peaches and cream' and an unlimited amount of pep—which I surely needed to stand the strain of a solid week of judging.

"Thanks again to Fleischmann's Yeast, I finished third in the Atlantic City finals. You will always find Yeast in my diet."

MARGUERITE JORDAN.



Wins title, "MISS KANSAS CITY," in beauty competition



"I learned to ride as I learned to walk," says Miss Rita La Roy. Who will doubt it in the face of the testimony above? Miss La Roy writes:

"AT AN EARLY AGE I was taken by my father to live on a large ranch. Before I was ten years old I was riding the plains with a .22 automatic strapped to my saddle. Breaking in ponies was a regular thing for me. One year I rode in the annual stampede.

"Then—my father died. The ranch grew unbearably lonely. I came to the city to live.

"But in spite of my hardy childhood life I gradually became run down, suffering with constipation and frequent colds. I was beginning to become distressed... Three years ago I began eating Fleischmann's Yeast. Next winter I didn't have a single bad cold. And my constipation was helped, too."

RITA LA ROY, Hollywood, Calif.



AS fresh as any garden vegetable, Fleischmann's Yeast is a pure health food.

It cleanses the intestines. Keeps them active. Frees you from the constipation that saps your vigor and health. Soon your indigestion gives way. Skin troubles vanish. Your whole outlook on life brightens.

Buy 2 or 3 days' supply of Fleischmann's Yeast at a time from your grocer and keep in any cool dry place. Write for latest booklet on Yeast in the diet—free. Health Research Dept. K-64, The Fleischmann Co., 701 Washington St., New York.



"I was placed in a very embarrassing position," writes William Blakeney. His letter follows:

"IN MY WORK with one of the largest photographic studios in the world I meet hundreds of people every day. Naturally it was particularly embarrassing to me when my face broke out in pimples.

"Various soaps and ointments didn't help. A boil broke out on my skin. I couldn't sleep. Then more boils, leaving ugly scars—what was I to do?

"The advice of a former classmate was 'Fleischmann's Yeast'. I tried it, and in a month the improvement was wonderful. My skin cleared up. I felt great. Yeast surely was a life-saver to me—I can't praise it enough!"

WILLIAM BLAKENEY, Newtonville, Mass.

Easy, natural—this new way to health, to greater zest in living

Eat three cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast regularly every day, one cake before each meal or between meals. Eat it just plain, or dissolved in water (hot or cold) or any other way you like. For stubborn constipation physicians recommend drinking one cake in a glass of hot water—not scalding—before each meal and before going to bed. And train yourself to form a regular daily habit. As you are benefited by eating Yeast you can gradually discontinue dangerous, habit-forming cathartics.

Film-Dulled Teeth Made White and Sparkling

FILM is the cause of serious tooth and gum disorders. Now remove it in the light of present scientific knowledge.

Send Coupon for 10-Day Tube Free

(See Opposite Page)

THE care you give your teeth is an important secret of lovely, healthy teeth, say dental specialists.

For the most perfect teeth, under old-time care, will fail you long before ordinary teeth given modern methods. And modern methods mean *keeping teeth free of film regularly—every day.*

Dental science says dull, "off-color" teeth are found invariably to be film coated.

Teeth unusually subject to decay and the commoner tooth and gum disorders are also generally film coated.

Now, in collaboration with high dental authority, a special way, called Pepsodent, has been perfected that removes film. Removes it thoroughly where ordinary brushing methods fail.

FILM—What it is and does

Run your tongue across your teeth and you will feel a slippery, viscous coating. That is film.

It clings to teeth so stubbornly that brushing alone will not remove it successfully. It gets into crevices and stays.

Stains from food and smoking are absorbed into film and make teeth "off color" and dingy.

Germs breed in film by the millions. And they, with the tartar film develops into, are the chief cause of pyorrhea.

Film, too, invites the acids of decay.

Thus, before new ways were found to remove it, tooth and gum disorders were on the increase.



Dental science discovers way How it acts

Under close direction of leading dental specialists, a special film-removing dentifrice, called Pepsodent, was discovered. It acts to curdle the film and to remove it in gentle safety to enamel.

In this development the world has gained a new conception of what a dentifrice should be and do. Dentists by the thousands tell us this.

Firms gums—Combats decay

Pepsodent also firms and hardens gums, thus gives that healthy coral tint.

In still other ways it increases the alkalinity of saliva to neutralize fermenting foods, which cause the acids of decay.

So fundamentals of modern preventive dental practice are embodied in this latest work of science.

Use for 10 days free

To have bright, gleaming teeth, to have healthier teeth and gums, dentists say "remove that film." This patients are told today in 58 foreign nations.

Send for free 10-day tube. You'll see far whiter teeth and firmer gums ten days from now.

See your dentist twice a year. Use Pepsodent twice daily. There's nothing more that science knows to do.



PEPSODENT'S FIRST MISSION is to protect teeth from serious tooth and gum disorders. To do this as science sees it, film must be combated, for film harbors trouble. Remove film twice daily, Miss Irene Love, of Washington, D. C., is told.

P E P



(Above) CLAIRE WINDSOR and PAULINE STARKE start their favorite whippets in a feature race at Hollywood. In the movies Pepsodent is a part of daily make-up.



When They Smile

The world sees gleaming teeth
free from "off-color" film

HOW do they care for their teeth? What do they do to keep smiles sparkling white? That is what others ask and wonder about the charming people pictured here.

This is the answer. For smiles to gleam and sparkle, first film must be removed from teeth. For film makes teeth dull, "off color," and gives that dingy look.

Ordinary brushing fails. Get the special film-removing dentifrice called Pepsodent. It cleanses the teeth completely. Then polishes and gives them high lustre in safety to enamel.

Wherever you go today you see flashing smiles that the twice daily use of Pepsodent is bringing. And winning smiles are important both commercially and socially.



(Above) TEA FOR TWO is enjoyed by Miss Dorothy Burke and Stanley Sands. Here are two winning smiles that depend on Pepsodent for sparkle.



(Left) THE CHRISTENING of the private yacht "Helen of Troy," by Miss Helen Field, is a unique occasion. Her smile, famous socially, retains its lustre through twice daily use of Pepsodent.

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Only one tube to a family 2835

S O D E N T

ate alone, so that he might not be taunted by the sight of forbidden foods and infuriated by his own diet. The others went to the dining-room where Judy told Warwick to sit by her. Rarely, spite of his wealth, had Warwick been in a room so beautifully appointed.

The dining-room, like his bedroom, looked out over the ocean and a dozen tall candles lifted lazy flames against the soft dusk. There was fine lace on the table and silver bowls of great hothouse grapes. Everyone was at ease. They talked of a dozen subjects, handling them lightly.

Two maids moved about deftly and quietly, serving exceptionally good food. It was very pleasant. It was too pleasant. For, sitting beside Judy, seeing the shimmer of the candle-light on her hands, feeling his heart stir as she turned to him with some comment or question, Warwick knew this was all wrong. It was dabbled in life. It was all on the surface.

Then again, his resistance waned. If he had allowed himself to be happy he knew he would have been. But his habit of discipline forbade it.

"What shall we do?" Judy asked when dinner was over.

He looked at his watch. It was almost ten o'clock. "Pretty late to do anything, isn't it?"

"Oh no. Where are you going, Molly?"

Molly Stephenson was going to drive over to Montauk. There was to be a crowd there.

"All right. We'll be along too."

They drove to Montauk, not too fast, for the road curves along the ocean and the moon was coming up. Nothing so far had been as beautiful as that few minutes between them. He was sure that she must care for him, he was entirely sure that he loved her. That was why her insistence that they go on to Montauk to join a noisy crowd seemed incredible to him.

"I don't want to see people," he protested, "not now."

"Why, of course you do. They're lots of fun. And it's really rather a lovely place. We mayn't get over here again."

It was against every romantic tradition that he cherished for the perfect woman. She should have wanted to be alone with him, to hold that perfect mood which they had found by the ocean. Instead, she must take it into that jumble of people whom they found at Montauk.

He admitted that the place was remarkable. The girls were either beautiful or so well-dressed that it didn't matter that they weren't. Bill Holt's party, which came in shortly after Warwick and Judy arrived, was stimulating. They were all rich young men and some of them were very clever. Warwick had never been an intimate part of such a group and the thing that bothered him most was that he caught himself enjoying it, laughing uproariously, admiring the girls.

That was altogether wrong after those moments with Judy. His heart and mind—even his eyes—should have been closed to everyone but her. The fact that he liked dancing with the pretty girl in red distressed him.

GOING home he had thought he and Judy would recapture their moment, but they did not go alone. Some car had broken down and they took three people back with them.

"Do you really care a lot for this sort of thing?" he asked Judy when at last it seemed time to say good night. "Sometimes I think you're two people, Judy."

"Which two?"

"The one you show to the crowd and the one I know."

"I think you got that out of a play," she said, "sounds familiar."

"I think you might be serious."

"It's too late. What did you ask me?"

"How much that sort of riot means to you," he repeated.

"Riot?" she questioned. "Does it seem like that? They're very good friends, some of those people—and amusing."

"But life isn't amusing—not real life."

"Then I think we should try to make it so,"

reflected Judy and for a moment was sober. "It's the least we can do for it, poor old life."

The sand was gay with umbrellas and bright with extravagant color. That tiny stretch of ocean appropriated for the summer colony was carefully roped off and a couple of life-guards watched the swimmers. The children and nurses had come down earlier but it was about half past eleven when the automobiles began to swing into position beside the bath-houses and women and men appeared on the beach.

Judy's coat was orange silk and above it those short, incorrigible curls were rumpled by the breeze. Under the coat was a stark little black wool bathing-suit. They were a very handsome pair, she and Warwick. They sat on the sand.

"Nice day," she said.

He was thinking of what it might mean to come down here with her day after day in the summer, to lie here in the sun and watch her, to be married to her. He wanted to put his hand out and run it through her curls and he was aware that nearly any other man whom she knew well would have done it. But he did not.

Someone called to her and she was up and off across the beach to talk to a group of people, a tall, dark-skinned man, a very thin blond woman, a younger man wrapped in a bathrobe. Warwick saw heads turn to watch Judy as she went along.

"Good morning."

He looked around. "Hello!" he exclaimed. Bee Newman dropped down beside him. "Deserted?"

"Judy went to speak to someone."

Her eyes followed his toward Judy and she smiled. "I don't wonder," she said.

"Why?"

"Don't you know Frank Rand?"

"Oh, is that Rand?"

"Yes. And his wife with him. Hasn't Judy a glorious nerve?"

"I don't get you."

She looked embarrassed. "But surely—oh, I didn't mean anything."

He wanted to press it but hardly knew what to ask. Bee let it drop. She stretched herself out on the sand and he saw that she too was lovely. Gold and blue this girl, not brown and gold, like Judy. She looked so thoughtful that she seemed out of place.

"Great this morning, isn't it?"

"Yes, if the crowd weren't here."

"You don't like crowds, do you?"

"I like the ocean and the sky and the sun," she said, "but these people bore me. They don't come down here to swim. They come down to see each other. It's so artificial."

"That's what I feel."

"I hate to make a social event out of everything. But then," said Bee apologetically, "I don't enjoy it, that's all. I'm not like Judy. I'm queer, I suppose."

"I wonder if Judy really does like it."

"Judy? She loves people. Of course she's always been made a lot of and I suppose that's one reason. What are you doing this afternoon?"

"Watching the tennis, I understand."

"Are you going to the Rines' party?"

"Judy mentioned it."

"Of course you'll go. Judy wouldn't miss it."

"Is it so important?"

"Not to me. But if you care for elaborate summer dances and—well, the crowd—then I suppose it's very important."

"We agree on a lot of things."

"Do we?" she asked in pleased surprise. "I wonder if that's why I feel so at home with you."

He saw Judy drop her coat on somebody's chair just then, go out into the waves with a run and dive through the breakers. They tossed her up and soon she was swimming beyond them. Suddenly Warwick wanted to be with her, alone with her out there.

But by the time he reached her, so had someone else. From the beach two people were watching her closely, Frank Rand with unhappy eyes and Bee Newman speculatively.

She had disappeared when the swimmers came in again and Warwick, wondering if he had been rude, looked about for her. The fashionable bathing hour was over.

Warwick was subconsciously worried about two things. The first one was that these people were so physically fit and that hardly went with his theory of decay. They swam well. They rode well. Apparently they got up in the morning, for he and Judy had breakfasted before nine and Duffield Chaloner was already departing for the golf course.

Judy had telephoned the riding club for horses and they had ridden together along the lanes bordered with honeysuckle. It had been disturbing. He was getting more exercise than he had taken in some time. And the day seemed orderly. They knew what they were going to do with each part of it.

The other thing was that he was enjoying himself. He was relaxing, almost against his will, into this picture of pleasure. The Chaloner household absorbed him into its easy habits. No one interfered with him but everything was offered him.

"Do you mind lunching with me and Jumbo?" inquired Judy. "We could go to the club but everyone else is out and luncheon is Jumbo's gay meal."

WARWICK did not mind at all. He found the elder Chaloner interesting though rather appalling. Luncheon was a function and the food excellent. For this old man, on the brink of the grave, to be so particular about what he ate seemed ridiculous to Warwick. Yet he had a curious feeling that the old man knew what was in his mind and was challenging him.

"Yes," said Jumbo, wheezing a bit, "we raise potatoes down here. Potatoes and ducklings. I had hoped once we would raise gentlemen."

"Does that crop ever pay for itself?" questioned Warwick.

"It would, sir. It would in time. It's paid England. It's what this country needs."

"Still, we have a great many thinking men in this country, Mr. Chaloner."

Old Jumbo heaved a cracked sigh. "Yes," he said, "too many of them. They think out loud. They think in public. They think for publication."

"Shouldn't they?"

"If a man has a philosophy," answered old Jumbo, "it's his private affair. Men—gentlemen, at least, don't talk about their private affairs."

And he grumbled and asked Judy to taste the salad dressing which he had been mixing. Warwick could not get him to pursue the subject.

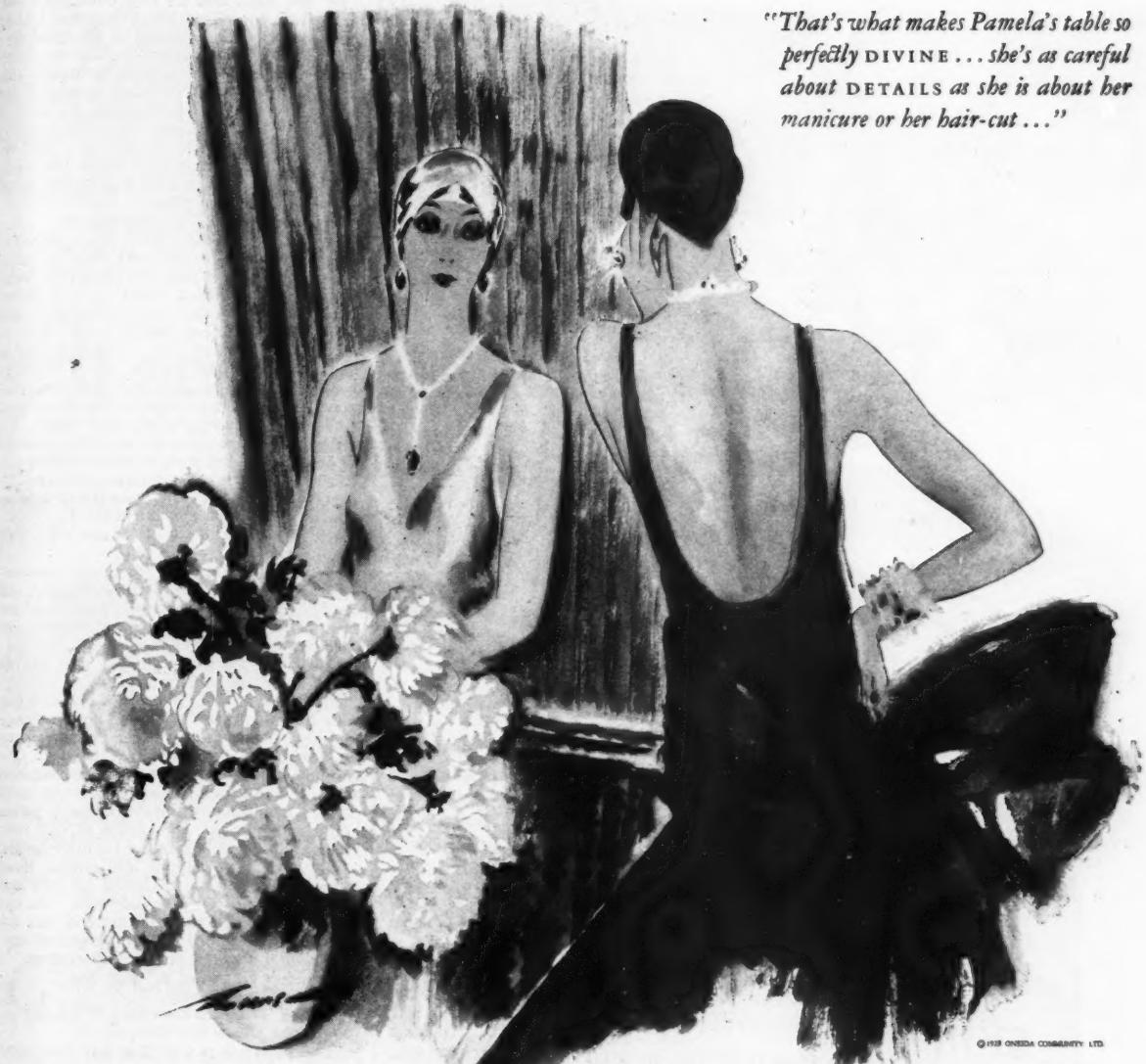
Judy took him upstairs after dinner, her bright head close to the heavy white one, her slim strong arm through his. She was very fond of him, and Warwick liked her more for it. But when he gravely mentioned it to her she only said that Jumbo was a delightfully wicked old boy and that they'd better hurry if they were to see Glen Ferris play.

Warwick already felt that he had been visiting the Chaloners a long while now and yet it was not twenty-four hours. Even the streets of the village seemed familiar and as if they had begun to belong to him.

The people whom they met on the bleachers set up beside the famous turf courts were many of those he had seen on the beach or at Montauk. It gave him an odd sense of belonging, that he was part of what was going on. For a long time, since he left school, he had not belonged to anything except his mother and his business, and he had a queer truant feeling that it was wrong to be so content.

The tennis was an excellent display of skill and the audience watched in concentrated silence. The sun poured down upon the exposed bleachers and yet Warwick heard no complaints about that. He wondered if after all these people did have a certain amount of discipline, or was it possibly control that he meant? At any rate there was no question that most of them were healthy.

"That's what makes Pamela's table so perfectly DIVINE...she's as careful about DETAILS as she is about her manicure or her hair-cut..."



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MENNEN

He saw Rand and his thin blond wife not far from them. Warwick had never met Rand, though he knew he was one of the most distinguished lawyers in New York. He was more than a rich man, more than the husband of the heiress to a fortune, who didn't look as if she were happy or could make anyone else so.

Rand turned, his eyes carelessly running over the bleachers. They came to a stop on Judy and then seemed to consider Warwick. Judy apparently did not see Rand at all. She was looking straight ahead.

"Beautiful serve," she murmured.

It was all confusing. He felt in things and out of them. Rand came over after the game without his wife and Judy introduced the men. Strange that Warwick should feel in Rand something of the challenge he sensed in old Grant Chaloner. But he did not analyze it then. There was no time. For they had a technical tea at Bill Holt's, where arrangements for a yachting party next day were completed and went on to dress for the dinner that the Rines were having before their dance.

He met Judy as she came downstairs dressed for the dinner. She wore a circlet of diamonds about her throat, yellowish diamonds set carefully in gold. She saw his eyes upon it and coming close lifted her chin so he might see it.

"Jumbo gave it to me. It's quite old. Isn't it lovely?"

It fitted the curves of her throat maddeningly. Before he could catch his impulse, she was in his arms and he seemed to have held her there before, so natural was it, so gracious her yielding.

"Well, the party's waiting," she said at length and drew herself away.

The party at the Rines' great house began with disappointment. He could not keep close to Judy. Some people whom he had known in New York introduced pretty wives who quite obviously had been told that he was rich and shy, and kept him firmly in charge until dinner was announced and the company, rather heady with cocktails, proceeded to find their places at an immense table set for forty people.

Warwick noticed Rand also among those seeking places. Then he found his own and looked about to see where Judy was. She was part of the jumble at the other end, but the girl on his left smiled and he recognized her.

"Hello. I thought you weren't coming."

"Couldn't get out of it," said Bee.

"You're looking lovely."

"Am I? It means something if you say so. I know how honest you are."

"I was sorry to run off that way this morning," he said.

"Men always run after Judy, and no one blames them. Not even their wives."

He frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Well, Helena Rand for instance. Look at the way she takes it. After the things she herself told and said."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"You don't? Why, you must! Everybody knew."

"Knew what?"

"About Judy and Frank Rand."

He looked down the table. Judy was leaning across someone talking to Rand, lifting her chin to display her necklace. The repetition of that attitude angered him.

"What was there to know?" he asked and hated his question.

She was negligent. "What did you say? Oh, about Judy. Why, it wasn't even gossip. The papers had it for a day or two though they dropped it. Helena left them in Paris, came back alone and swore she would divorce him. But she didn't. Frank came back on the next boat and Judy came back when she felt like it and everything was patched up."

"Probably nothing to patch," he said, his own voice unfamiliar.

"I suppose not. It depends," said Bee, "more or less on your standards, doesn't it? There are things I never could go through myself. But I suppose the thing for a girl to do is to regard each man as another one. And Judy of course has to have wealth."



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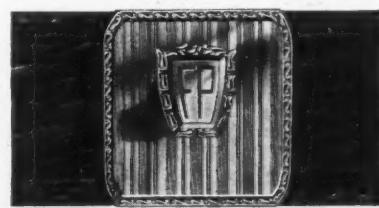
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Wadsworth

WORKERS IN PRECIOUS METALS

The woman on the other side kept saying things he could not remember to answer. Dinner kept going on and on. A crystal ornament in the shape of a peacock glittered in front of him and he kept wondering what would happen if he did smash it. No, it was no use to be melodramatic with this gang. You had to be as hard as they were. Each man as another one. Each girl as another one. That was the answer.

A man filled his glass with champagne. It tasted better than anything else. After dinner he danced with Bee Newman and told her again that she was beautiful. He told her many things about herself and though he was not entirely sober Bee felt he would remember some of them with a certain sense of obligation.

"Your boy friend's more than a little bit tight, isn't he, Judy?" asked Bill Holt.

"I don't understand it," said Judy.

"Maybe he doesn't know the potency of our beverages," suggested Bill, "and he's dumb anyway, darling."

"He's a great man," Judy answered. "Get him home, will you, Bill? Tell him anything. But get him to go."

"I can get anyone to go home," boasted Bill and went after it.

WARWICK woke late. It was partly exercise, partly champagne which had drugged him. It was some time before he had pieced things together and realized what had happened the night before. The memory was not pleasant. He was defiant and embarrassed. He remembered having made love rather vigorously to Bee Newman. He remembered—no, he refused to remember that.

It was ten o'clock. He heard a horse's hoofs on the drive and looked from his window. Judy had been out, alone this time. Or had she been alone? And what business was it of his, anyhow? But he guessed now why she had been so tired and forlorn when he had seen her on the boat coming back from Europe. Rand had done that, curse him.

He dressed and went downstairs a little sullenly to encounter again the perfect Chaloner hospitality. Breakfast and luxury awaited him. He ate alone in the breakfast room, but Duffield Chaloner came in with the papers and some talk of business conditions.

He was keen enough, Warwick found, and never referred to his own disasters. He invited Warwick to go around the golf course with him, unless he preferred to swim. Warwick chose the golf. He did not want to see Judy just yet.

She called for him at the golf-club at two o'clock and sent in word that he must come if they were to push off on the Holt boat at two-thirty. His impulse was to refuse to go but that was obviously impossible. And he found himself beside her again in her car, rushing along toward Sag Harbor.

"I'm afraid I acted like a bum last night," he said at length.

"Oh, no. Nobody noticed it. They always have too much to drink at the Rines' dinners."

"I'm sorry," he insisted.

She let him be sorry without protest.

Suddenly he found what he wanted to say.

"Judy, let me take you out of this."

"Out of what?"

"This kind of life. Let me take you to something real, something finer. Let's forget everything that ever happened before we knew each other."

She looked at him faintly puzzled.

"It doesn't matter what happened," he said.

"It doesn't matter."

"Oh," said Judy, in a changed voice, "I see."

"I heard about it. And I only want to ask one thing. Do you care about Rand now?"

"I certainly do. I'm awfully fond of him," answered Judy; "I always have been."

"Then I guess that settles it."

"Does it?"

"It isn't that I blame you," he said hotly,

defending her since she wouldn't defend herself.

"It's the life you've been taught to lead. Living with people who want pleasure and

money. Black and white are bound to blur."

"I'm pretty good on color."

"Don't laugh."

"Why not? It's funny enough to think of the earful Bee gave you."

"You mustn't blame her. A girl like that, serious and reflective, naturally looks at things as you don't. But she gets your point of view."

Judy's eyes were hard and cold.

"All I wish is that I could take you out of this," finished Warwick.

"Well, you can't," said Judy. "I like the way I live. I like my friends. They're loyal and they're fair—and they aren't worthless no matter what you think, even if they don't go around groaning all the time or pinching pennies. I think life was made to enjoy and I think you enjoy it more when you're rich than when you're poor. That's why I hope I get me a rich husband. Bee probably mentioned that I was after one. So I am. My family needs one. I had you distinctly in mind. But you're off the list."

"But you won't marry a man just because he's rich!"

"Oh, let's enjoy ourselves," said Judy nonchalantly.

She ran into a quay, parked firmly against a wooden curbing and lifted her hand in gay salute to the men and girls waiting in the launch. He followed her and the little boat carried them out to the white yacht.

Bee was there. She had been dragged into it, she confided to Warwick, and welcomed him. Warwick found that they were being rather obviously left together. They tried to talk and every little while he realized that she was saying something or other that he had once agreed with and it sounded sententious and dull. Drifts of laughter came from the others.

The yacht went lightly out of the harbor on the cruise which was to bring them back in moonlight and Warwick felt time slipping by him. The weekend was almost over and it had crashed about his ears. He could go back now to work and forget this. Or could he forget?

The sunset was magnificent as Bee kept exclaiming, but Warwick enjoyed it only verbally. They all went down for a lavish supper when it had faded and returned to wait for moonlight. He deserted Bee then, and looked for Judy.

She was leaning back in a deck chair talking to Bill Holt, who sat on the arm of her chair, and it seemed to Warwick that there was something tender in Bill's manner. The young fellow standing by Warwick noticed it too.

"I suppose they'll be having their wedding trip on this boat," he said.

"Who?"

"Bill and Judy, of course."

"Is that in the cards?"

"Oh, I suppose they'll come to it. You'd think she'd take him. He's been after her for years and everyone knows the Chaloners could use a rich son-in-law. But that's Judy. She carries her own weight."

"Yes," answered Warwick, hating himself.

"The thing I like about Judy," the young man resumed, for he was drunk enough to be mildly indiscreet and not quite sure of the connection Warwick had with the party anyway, "is that she's so sporting. Look at the way she handled that Rand affair. Everyone knew Helena Rand pulled that stuff to cover up her own affair. But she got Judy in the papers with it and kept her own mess out of it."

"Of course everyone who knew Judy stood by her but then a lot of people don't know her. Judy wouldn't even defend herself. Bee Newman did a lot of talking—most of it, I guess. She'd been in Paris at the time, playing with Helena Rand."

"How did she happen to be there?" asked Warwick rather senselessly, but he had to say something. He was ashamed and sick and lonely as he had never been in all his lonely life.

"Who? Bee? Getting a divorce, I suppose. Isn't that where she usually picks them up? She hasn't been playing in very good luck with her alimony either. Didn't the last husband go broke? That's what she can't forgive Judy

for, I suppose, because she plays so square and yet has everybody after her. But a girl like Bee with a couple of fishy divorces and crazy for money isn't such a straight shooter as she ought to be. Can't blame her either," he suddenly qualified, remembering vaguely that Warwick was Bee's cavalier. "How about a little drink before we land?"

"No."

It seemed endless, that ride through moonlit water, with people talking, joking, singing. But it had to come to an end. The boat dropped its anchor and they climbed into the little launch and went ashore. Warwick waited for the ride home. He could talk to her then. No—the crowd was mixed again. Judy's car was full and Bill was with her.

Somebody offered to take Warwick back and he discovered that he was in the rear of a crowded car with Bee Newman next to him. But when he was dropped at the Chaloners' he was too late. Judy had gone upstairs.

He had been up since dawn. Queer how much he hated to leave this house. It felt like home and he hadn't known a home for years. This leased house which had welcomed him as its guest for two days would always be a memory full of graciousness and beauty. Judy was right. People ought to live as if they loved life, not constantly reprimanding it. They were gay, spirited people, secret with their troubles, but open with cordiality. And he had chosen to admire Bee Newman, the only dishonest one in the lot probably.

He despised himself. But there was no use thinking about it. He was due to leave on the Sunrise Special, the seven-twenty train. The Filipino boy had called him and attended him at breakfast. Now he came knocking again for Warwick's suitcases.

"Mr. Grant Chaloner ask you to stop in his room. This way."

The boy led the way down the hall and opened a door. Old Jumbo lay in an enormous bed by the open window. Though he looked very old as well as very fat there was still manner in his greeting.

"Going, Warwick?"

"Yes, sir."

"I may not see you again. I'll stick in my own fat one of these days. Well, you come of honest stock, Warwick, and I guess you've plenty of money and the disposition that hangs on to it. But you're not good enough for Judy, for all that."

"I know. You don't have to tell me, Mr. Chaloner."

"Judy," the old man sighed, "knows what life's about. She always did know. She never flinches at it. She likes it, rough or smooth. But I'm glad she's going to get what you have, what your grandfather had, stability and all the rest of it. Couldn't catch on to it myself. Didn't want it. Judy does. Be good to her."

"I'll not have the chance."

"Oh, yes. She wants you. She loves you. Good-by."

HE TURNED his head away and Warwick went out. The old man shamed him again, but his words set Warwick throbbing. If he could see Judy again before he left—and there she was at the end of the hall.

She hesitated and then came forward, straight toward pain, as was like her. Her face was like a tired child's as he had seen it first.

"Judy, I can't tell you what a fool I've been!"

"Did you hear another rumor?" she asked coldly.

"I heard only one thing that counts," he said, "and that was that you love me. And because of that I love you more than anyone else ever has or can. I love you and your life and the way you look at everything. Take me on any terms, Judy—only take me—"

She smiled and her answer was in her eyes, dazzling Warwick with its promise. But her voice was gay and even.

"I'll take you to the train," she said, "and meet the five-fifteen next Friday."

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Alimony by Faith Baldwin (Continued from page 33)

position, that much he had headed—the daughter of a druggist—a town girl. She'd hated the men she had known—the boys and men of—of her own class.

So she had married him, he reflected, getting into the bed beside her own, to escape. It had cost him his graduation and the approval of his parents—that escape. They'd been hurt, sore. They'd sacrificed to send him to the university. And he had thrown it all away because of—summer lightning.

Cost! Cost! He'd not done paying yet!

Tonight's storm muttered uneasily, coming nearer. But Charlotte lay very still.

Divorce?

Every ancestral voice within him cried out in warning. Every fiber of his inherited nature shrank back as if confronted with something evil, unnatural. You married. For better or for worse. Generally for worse. But you stayed married. All the courts in the world could not release you.

Confound it, he couldn't sleep!

He'd be tired tomorrow. He would be weary, with that bruised, beaten feeling. He'd drag himself about the office, half dead. Ketcham would snap at him and grumble, like an old dog. Miss Harkness would look at him with those gray eyes and scold him for not resting, for rushing through his frugal luncheon.

Divorce!

Never!

And yet it seemed to him as he lay there listening to Charlotte's even breathing that there was something evilly indecent about their physical proximity in the small bedroom, divided by a hand's breadth of floor space.

Outside, the storm broke. The thunder crashed and the rain pelted down, healing, cool, rivers and rivers of it.

But in the bedroom storm still muttered. There was no feeling of a clean washing away of rancor and dislike. They lay there side by side as wife and husband should lie.

Strangers. Sleeping together. Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Dane, husband and wife.

Hating each other . . .

IN THE morning, while the water for his bath was running, Stephen went into the kitchen; he filled the percolator and set it over the gas flame. Returning to the bedroom, he found Charlotte as he had left her, sleeping deeply.

When he was ready, he sat down at the decorative kitchen table to make himself toast and drink the scalding coffee. The orange juice had been squeezed the night before by the part-time maid and left in the ice-box.

Stephen ate and drank, without enjoyment, his eyes on the morning paper.

When he had finished, he put the few dishes in the sink and set Charlotte's waiting tray with toast, coffee and fruit juice. Then he carried it to her, a mechanical action, part of his daily routine.

Charlotte was awake. She yawned and stretched between the sheets, like a lazy cat. When he entered she thumped up her pillows and lay back against them, regarding him with indifferent eyes. Stephen set the tray on the night table between their beds. He looked at her and perceived that her face bore no sign of her tempestuous weeping of the night before.

She murmured something—a makeshift greeting—asked him, casually: "You won't be late tonight? We have the Warrens coming."

He nodded. At this juncture it was his custom to stoop over her and brush her unresponsive lips with his own. This morning he stood beside the bed, awkward, uncertain.

But Charlotte was lifting her face, as automatically as she had offered it to him for uncounted mornings in the past. And, as mechanically, although conscious of a vague, resentful astonishment, he leaned down and touched her cheek with tight-closed lips.

A moment later the outer door closed behind him.

Charlotte ate her breakfast, then, setting the tray aside, she lay back and considered the coming day. She must market—by telephone—for tonight's dinner. She must remember to ask Eliza, the maid, if the best dinner napkins and the Florentine lace cloth were clean. She must attend to flowers and new candles.

She was lurching with Helene Carter, and they could take in an early picture show.

Helene was Charlotte Dane's closest friend. They understood one another—were foils, complements. Helene was blonde, steel to her satin, vivacity to her languor. She had divorced Jim Carter some time ago and lived alone in an atmosphere of subdued and wistful elegance.

Her alimony was more than generous and she was childless, her only child having died in infancy. She was fond of alluding to the three-weeks-old infant, her brilliance veiled in the gauze of suggested tears, and her voice poignant—"If Sonny had only lived!" She did not inflict this appealing phrase upon Charlotte, for Charlotte knew. She had met Helene before the baby's birth, and had been made aware of Helene's rebellion and her craven terror.

At the time Mrs. Carter divorced her fat, easy-going husband, it had been more or less taken for granted that after she had "adjusted" herself to new conditions she would take a position somewhere and cut down the six thousand a year he allowed her. Helene had an instinct for interior decorating, and when she was living with Jim, the decorators she had employed had congratulated her upon her intelligent cooperation and had said, "If only I had you in my office, dear Mrs. Carter!"

But although she had approached several of them since her divorce, tentatively reminding them that this longing of theirs might be gratified—at a price—they had forgotten or were completely "staffed."

So she wrote Jim that she wasn't well and that her doctor warned her against working. And Jim went on paying her five hundred a month. Luckily, he could afford it. And didn't mind—much—although it took him a long time to recover from a feeling of bewilderment.

Helene had had no real case against him. Merely, he bored her. Mental cruelty. And Reno had been fun, rather.

It had been Helene who first suggested to Charlotte Dane that she join the ranks and free herself from Stephen. Today Charlotte intended to tell her that she had opened negotiations and failed.

They lunched at a small French place where the food and service were good and the prices proportionate to their excellence. They smoked throughout the meal and talked incessantly.

"Did you speak to him?"

"I did. He was horrified. Wouldn't hear of it. His face—I wish you'd seen it."

"Well, after all, he doesn't count—nor does his opinion," Helene comforted.

"Oh, yes, he does," Charlotte answered, morose. "He'd have to foot the bill. I haven't a cent, you know that."

Helene pondered, pushing at a lettuce leaf with her fork. "If you make it disagreeable enough for him—" she intimated. "There are ways and means—refusals—you know. After all, this is the first time you've approached him. Keep at it. It isn't hard to wear a man down. I know. And I've set my heart upon our taking a little place somewhere and living together."

"I know," Charlotte sighed, as she looked into a dream future and visualized life with Helene. Helene had friends, many of them men—with money—attractive men. "I know. But even if he consented he couldn't give me much—he doesn't make enough. He's not like Jim."

Helene shrugged her thin shoulders. "Steve's no fool—he's bound to get ahead," she commented carelessly. "As his income

goes up the alimony can be increased. It's all a question of your lawyer. In any case we'd manage somehow. Don't weaken, Sharlie—you're insane to live as you do. You'll be an old woman before your time."

They smoked reflectively, in a lull of silence. Helene broke it, asking suddenly:

"There's no other way, is there? No way in which you could force him? No other woman, for instance?"

Charlotte laughed. "Stephen? Be yourself! No such luck. He doesn't know that women exist! The only time he stays away you may be sure he's working at the office, and if he calls up to tell me so, it's no alibi. He's there, all right!"

"Doesn't that secretary—stenographer—whatever she is—stay overtime to work with him?" murmured Helene. "The tall girl with the eyes? I saw her once—the time you and I stopped in at the office together."

"Secretary?" Charlotte had an exasperating trick of repeating one's words. "Oh, Miss Harkness? Yes, she stays—what of it?"

Helene answered, her tone a little hard: "Nothing. Office wives—it's a *canard*, of course, nothing to it. But—if you wanted to think so?"

They were silent once more, dark eyes intent upon the blue. Presently Charlotte smiled.

"I see. Well—you're very clever, Helene."

Mrs. Carter deprecated the praise by the lift of an eyebrow. She looked over their check, tossed it to Charlotte. Always, save for special occasions, they shared, even to the tip.

WHEN they were in a small uptown motion-picture house Helene said, slowly: "About the money—I could lend you a little. I can't seem to save much. But—I could manage a trifle, you know."

"No." Charlotte set her lips, damaging their painted curve. "No. Thanks a lot. But he'll have to pay. It's only fair."

"Very well. I see your point," the other woman answered and kept from her voice even the faintest intonation of the relief she felt, "but, when the time comes, I'll have your lawyer lined up. He is brilliant—he'll get all he possibly can for you. And won't charge you much. I'll see to that. Stephen needn't know how little he will charge. We'll arrange that. Max and I are close friends—he'll be willing. A little extra pocket-money won't hurt you. I've recommended Max to so many people he'd be glad to do me a favor."

Charlotte nodded. Her heart beat a little faster. This cool discussion with Helene, this taking things for granted, seemed to strip her freedom of the nebulousness of dreams, revealing it in the nakedness of fact.

And, back at the office, Eve Harkness was saying to Charlotte's husband: "Here's the glass of milk. You do look ill, Mr. Dane."

He smiled and thanked her and turned back to his papers as she went to her desk. She had a low, clear voice, and her eyes were the color of straight-falling rain on a gray autumnal day. She was tall and moved her body beautifully, with no sex-consciousness. Her hands were very lovely.

Stephen found himself thinking of her. He knew so little about the girl, really, although she had worked with him for two years.

Late in the afternoon he asked her to get his wife on the wire for him. When she had done so: "Charlotte? I'm sorry, I can't get home—not until nine or so. Some work has come along—important. I'll have to stay."

Charlotte's voice reached him, shrilly petulant. "It's too bad of you, Stephen. You knew the Warrens were coming!"

"Couldn't you get someone in? Helene Carter, perhaps? I'll be back in time for bridge."

She answered nothing, merely hung up her receiver with a vicious clatter. He murmured to the dead wires, inanely, "I see—all right, then—with you later—good-by." He could not bear that anyone, not even his impersonal

secretary, should know that Charlotte would cut him off without a word.

He turned from the instrument and interrogated Miss Harkness with a difficult smile: "That's that, then. If we hurry we can get through in fair time. Would you have some dinner with me, a little later, somewhere? I hate to keep you in like this, Miss Harkness."

"I don't mind," she answered gently. She was very sorry for him, he looked so deathly tired. "Staying in doesn't bother me. Yes, it would be nice to have dinner together."

She smiled at him, entirely friendly, and went on with her work, as he with his.

OVER the Italian *table d'hôte* to which he took her later she watched the food and relaxation bring back some of the color and life to his drawn face. He was such a nice person, she thought. It was a pity he worked so hard, gave himself so, for such small rewards.

"Where do you live, Miss Harkness? I've never asked you — it seems absurd, not knowing."

A small apartment uptown, she told him, shared, she explained, with another girl.

"You have no people, then?" he asked. He was enjoying this hour of rest and Eve Harkness. They had had dinner together before — snatched, rushed meals—and the talk had all been of business—never of personalities.

"My father died when I was small," Eve answered, "and my mother remarried. She divorced my stepfather some time ago."

He wondered—why doesn't she live with her mother? It was not a question he could ask, however, but it was answered, for Eve went on, a faint flush staining her smooth olive cheek:

"She—my mother—lives in New York, too. But after I went to work I preferred to live alone. It seemed best."

Suddenly, unaware that he was speaking, appalled when he realized what he'd said, but his mind so full of the subject that it was inevitable, he blurted out: "Divorce? You—you don't approve of divorce, then?"

In the brief silence following his query he was hot and cold with embarrassment. What a question! But, somehow, he knew she didn't. How the devil had he known? he thought, bewildered.

He leaned toward her and said swiftly: "I'm awfully sorry. I didn't mean to ask that. It just slipped out. Please forgive me."

Her mouth, which was beautifully cut, which could be the stern mouth of Athene or the tender mouth of Aphrodite, curved into a smile. He was very youthful in his embarrassment, she thought, her cool gray eyes warming.

"That's all right," she told him, brusk as a boy in order to set him again at his ease. "I don't mind your asking. Your train of thought wasn't hard to follow. No, I don't approve of it. I hate it. I'm an anachronism, I guess."

She has been hurt by it—badly—he thought, watching the warmth fade from her eyes, the amusement from her lips.

After a time he asked, idly: "Your name—Harkness? I knew a Harkness in New Haven. His son was in my class at college. A banker, the old man was. It is your own name, I suppose."

"Oh, yes—I think the Harkness you speak of is a relative. A cousin of my father's—once removed, or something like that. He was a New Englander, too. Yes, it's my own name. I didn't take Mr. Bedford's, although I was almost a baby when my mother married him."

Bedford? Stephen drew his fine, clear-cut brows together. Hadn't he heard something—read something? Thorpe Bedford? He spoke the name aloud and Eve nodded.

"Yes—my stepfather."

When he had taken her home, much against her will, he rode back to his subway station reflecting on the general oddity of life. Thorpe Bedford—who everybody knew! But nobody knew how much money the man had—he made it hand over fist. A hard-headed business man, Bedford, and a frequenter of night clubs—a man who ate and drank grossly, with a reputation among certain expensive women.

And this man was Eve Harkness' step-father and Eve was Stephen Dane's secretary. Incredible! Stephen remembered, as he mounted the subway steps and started on the long riverward walk, that there had been newspaper talk at the time of Bedford's divorce—his last divorce—surely he had been married and freed before? The alimony had been mentioned, an amazing sum of money. And the woman who benefited by it had a daughter who worked for her living!

Stephen let himself into his apartment, hearing, as he came into the small foyer, the clash of voices—Helene's, Charlotte's, the lazy tones of Warren's voice, light for a man, and Mrs. Warren's rapid, hurrying accents.

Smoke was thick in the living-room. The highball glasses were set on the tea-table—a silver bowl of ice was melting. Faces turned to him from the bridge table, voices called, greeted. Gaines Warren said:

"Sitting up with sick friend, one supposes. Blonde or brunette? It's lucky for you that Charlotte is such an unsuspicious little thing."

Stephen answered at random. He looked at his guests. He looked around the room and hated it all—not for the first time. Smoke and a whisky smell, the scent of powder and perfume, the flushed face of the other man, the hard eyes of the women, the silly talk, flippant, always with that dirty undercurrent of sexual preoccupation. What in heaven's name did it all amount to? Why did a man work like a driven dog in order to come home to this, in order to support such a meaningless ménage?

Charlotte smiled at him, a little grimly, he fancied.

"I'm a model wife, Gaines. And at that, I'm willing to give you odds that he's really been working at the office. After which he took his stenographer out to dinner and they talked—business."

Marie Warren laughed outright, and her husband quirked an eyebrow.

"It's true enough," Stephen answered.

He was suddenly angry, and Helene Carter, who had risen from the table, smiled. How amenable dear Charlotte is, she thought, how very open to suggestion!

"Count me out of this rubber," she demanded, over her bare shoulder. "I'm half dead. I want to sit on the couch and think of nothing, like one of those delicious Swamis, or whatever they are."

So Stephen took her place and played, with Charlotte as his partner. He was called sharply to account several times. He was so tired that he hardly heard.

It all meant nothing to him. He played mechanically, badly. He and Charlotte lost six dollars and the game went on, noisily, drearily. The Warrens quarreled, too, acidly. Someone cut out. Helene came in. Gaines moved to the ice bowl, mixing the drinks with a generous hand. It wasn't his liquor, he reflected gaily.

Some time after one, Stephen and Charlotte were alone.

"Why?" he inquired, dragging off a wilted collar, "why the devil must they stay so late? Haven't they any homes?"

"I wonder at it, too," Charlotte agreed smoothly. "Personally, I wouldn't stay ten minutes in any house where the host was so obviously anxious to have me go."

"Meaning me, I suppose."

"Oh, don't look so offended! You played the worst game of your life tonight, and that's saying something. You fidgeted the entire time, threw away trick after trick, yawned, looked bored. When Helene asked you for more ice, you behaved as if she'd sent you to Alaska to cut it. It isn't very pleasant for me to have you act in this manner. I have to carry all the burden."

"I didn't know—I didn't mean—" he started weakly, and then said, aware that any explanation was futility itself, "I'm sorry. I was very tired."

"You're always tired! Why on earth couldn't you come home at the proper time as you promised? The way you let them walk over you at the office! It looks so ridiculous, asking

people here to dine, a week ahead, and then not to have you on hand. It has happened more than once, Stephen."

"I had to work—"

"Oh, I know! It's funny that with all the work you do, the way you love it, the time you spend doing it, that you don't get ahead faster. I suppose I was right—you did take that Harkness girl out to dinner?"

"Yes, naturally. You people would have been finished long since. I couldn't come back and eat scraps in the kitchen, could I? And as to Miss Harkness—she had to have something. She was tired, too—she had a long way to travel, getting home."

"You're very considerate," snapped Charlotte, "of your stenographer!"

Afterwards, he was sorry that he had been goaded to reply, childishly:

"I wish you wouldn't call her that!"

Charlotte smiled maliciously. "I beg your pardon," she amended carefully, "your—secretary, of course."

They completed their undressing in silence and, in silence, went to bed.

Stephen thought, turning restlessly on his pillows—"It's going to be hot again—the thunder-storm last night didn't help much. Confounded nonsense—but I won't take her out to dinner again if it's going to lead to this sort of thing. Lord, if a man can't have friendly relations with a woman—business relations!"

He wrenches his mind from his gnawing irritation and set it to contemplating office problems which had come up within the last few weeks. And also the underground rumor that Ketcham, the general manager, had been made an offer by a Chicago firm. Should Ketcham leave, Stephen, who was his assistant, was in line for the vacant post. There would be a substantial increase in salary, as well as opportunity, authority, prestige.

He foresaw that, if he became Ketcham's successor, he might, within a reasonable length of time, struggle out of debt. If only there were some way in which to hold Charlotte down! She had been nagging at him for a car for a year now. If he got the new job she would demand it. Actually, had it not been for her wastefulness, they might have afforded a small, inexpensive car, initial cost and up-keep. But she had made it out of the question.

BEFORE he slept he thought again of Eve Harkness. It seemed incredible to him, accustomed as he now was to the greedy, snatching type of woman, that this girl should be willing to work her eight hours a day in an office and to live uptown in a shabby apartment house when, probably, she could live with her mother on Park Avenue and sew a fine seam, or whatever it was that idle young women did. Her mother's income, as reported in the newspapers, came back to him. Forty thousand a year they said that Bedford allowed her.

Nice girl, Eve Harkness. He liked her eyes—they were cool and steady, they seemed to give you something.

It was curious, yet a fact, that since last night he had not thought, very seriously, of Charlotte's demand for a divorce. He was accustomed to hearing her demand so many impossible things; why not, then, in a blaze of petulant anger, a divorce? It had impressed him that night because of her sudden letting go, because of all the wounding, amazing things she had said. But in anger married people said all they had ever thought—and more.

Charlotte was perfectly aware of his inhibitions—that's what she called his feeling. She knew that his entire tradition was against divorce. She knew that she had no grounds. Incompatibility? But that was a farce! If all the incompatible people went through the courts, there'd be few marriages left in the United States.

Charlotte could not go before a judge and asseverate that Stephen Dane had been unfaithful to her or unkind. Her only complaint, were she to be truthful, would be that her husband's salary was six thousand dollars a year and that she wished the spending of te

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times that sum. Not even an American court would grant a divorce upon such grounds! No, now that he had had time to think it over he could dismiss it as mere—conversation.

He would never hear of it again, he reflected, until their next serious quarrel.

Upon this, he slept. And awoke to find himself in error, for Charlotte reopened the attack after dinner the next evening.

She was calm this time, and tearless, and took the exasperatingly wifely attitude. Why can't we talk this over quietly and be sensible about it?

Stephen almost laughed aloud. "Talking things over quietly" with Charlotte always ended in voices raised beyond the limits set for ordinary courtesy, in recriminations and an eventual hostile silence, well refrigerated. He had talked things over quietly with her before.

Now he refused. He warned:

"Don't waste your breath, Charlotte. I'll never consent to such an absurdity, and you know it. You may as well stop talking—and thinking—about it. I don't believe you mean it, for one thing. Half of this nonsense is Helene Carter's influence."

"There you go, knocking my friends—my best friend, the only one who really cares what becomes of me!"

He laid down the paper and looked at her. She was walking about, restless; a high spot of color burning on either cheek. He thought, in sudden, swift incredulity—my wife! Wife! The woman he had held in his arms, the woman bound to him by the most intimate, the most personal of human relationships; and, beyond the woman, the girl he had loved, for whom he had sacrificed so much.

At this point he asked himself if it were for her he had sacrificed, or for the idea of her—for what she had stood for to him at one time—beauty, youth, and desire.

He did not love her now, whatever that other surge of emotion had been. He knew it, had known it for a long time.

But now, because he had once imagined her more wonderful than any living woman could be, and because, for a little time, she had granted him that young, ardent response which had been miracle and marvel and release, he looked at her with kindness and spoke to her gently.

"You don't mean that, Charlotte—that Helene is your best friend, the only one who cares."

"Who is, then?"

"I thought," he murmured awkwardly, "that I was. I've tried to be."

"You?" She laughed at him. "You? Any woman's husband—her friend? Stephen, how can you be so wilfully blind? We've been drifting apart all these years, ever since the first year. We've not a single thing in common. We don't like the same people, the same sort of good times—we don't even laugh at the same jokes. I want—everything I'm entitled to. I'm still young, I have looks, I'm ambitious, I want to live! And you—you don't want anything, I believe, except to plod along in your own rut and be let alone. And isn't that just what I am offering you? You'd be so much happier, too."

His impulse, vague in its inception, to try to meet her on some neutral, if not friendly, ground, passed. He was angry again, his mind rejected her—shut her out. He replied harshly:

"Whether or not I'd be happier is beyond the point. We entered upon certain obligations. As far as I can see we're in honor bound to keep them. I may be very old-fashioned."

"That's putting it mildly," Charlotte told him. "Talk about mid-Victorian!"

Stephen smiled, much to his own amazement. "I've been called that before by some of your very modern friends," he said. "I don't know what it means exactly. I take it that it's not complimentary from their point of view."

"But look here," said Charlotte, not listening and speaking with an entirely authentic savagery, "can't you see that our living together—when we don't care—when we're just muddling along—is *indecent*?"

"No, I don't see it," he answered shortly.

"That's just another catch word of the generation. They use words like that, your friends do—"indecent" and, in opposition, "honest"—to provide themselves with excuses in order to do what they want to do. It's 'indecent' to stay married when you've found out that marriage is no bed of roses; it's 'honest' for a woman to run away with her lover and smash up Lord knows how many lives. That sort of cheap talk gets nowhere with me. Forget it."

A week later he lived through some entirely horrible minutes. They had been out, at a night club, the guests of the Warrens. They had been drinking—Charlotte more so than usual. And when they came home she turned casually, carelessly amorous.

He felt like a fool when she grew sullen over his entire lack of response. He thought, bitterly, "So that's what it amounts to with her—this 'indecency.' "

The next day she had, apparently, forgotten.

Helene Carter's cousin, one of those lonely, feverishly civic spinsters who have too much money and disseminated mentalities, asked Helene, whom she admired and disapproved of, to come to Connecticut and spend a week with her in the new house, which she had built for herself, an elderly companion, and six Peckingese.

Helene consented, amiably. But she accepted with the proviso that she bring Charlotte Dane with her, for, as she told Charlotte naively:

"I should be bored to tears without. Janet expects to be listened to all the time. If you come, we can take it in broken doses."

Janet Winchester, who knew and liked Charlotte, wrote her immediately. Charlotte displayed the letter, all the glory of thick, rough paper with ragged edges, and creased.

"I'll go, of course," she told Stephen. "Oh, you needn't look so anxious, so—mathematical! I don't need any new clothes. Railroad fares and tips are all I'll require. And you'll be rid of me for a week."

Dutifully, he saw her and Helene off when the time came for them to go, sacrificing his luncheon hour in order to make up the time. And Eve Harkness paused by his desk later in the day to look at his worn, colorless face with genuine concern on her own.

"You mustn't drive yourself so," she told him with a more personal note in her voice than he had ever heard there. "You'll make yourself really ill."

He smiled up at her. He was grateful. It was good to have someone notice how you looked. Good, if childish.

He had sworn to himself that he wouldn't take Eve Harkness out again. It wasn't fair to her, although she'd never know Charlotte's insulting attitude toward her. But a night or so later, when they had again worked overtime, he found himself asking involuntarily:

"Shall we have dinner at that little Italian place, or would you rather go somewhere else?"

"Oh, I'm sorry," she replied instantly. "I'd like to so much. But I go to my mother one night every week she's in town, and this just happens to be the night."

Instead of the relief he should have felt that he was gracefully free of a situation which, on second thoughts, was awkward, he felt that he was curiously disappointed. So, to his own astonishment, he heard himself asking:

"Another time, then? Tomorrow night, perhaps? Mrs. Dane is out of town. I'm a poor amateur bachelor," he added, making a poor attempt at a tawdry jest, "and anyway," he ended with sudden deiance, "I'm lonely!"

Eve smiled faintly. She had been in business for some time now—she had been asked out before by lonely men. But Stephen Dane was "different." She couldn't think of a man she liked as well, or one she trusted as completely.

She felt, had felt ever since she had known him, that he was not happy at home. She had seen Mrs. Dane several times and had come to the conclusion, not a snap judgment, that it wouldn't be likely he could be happy, being

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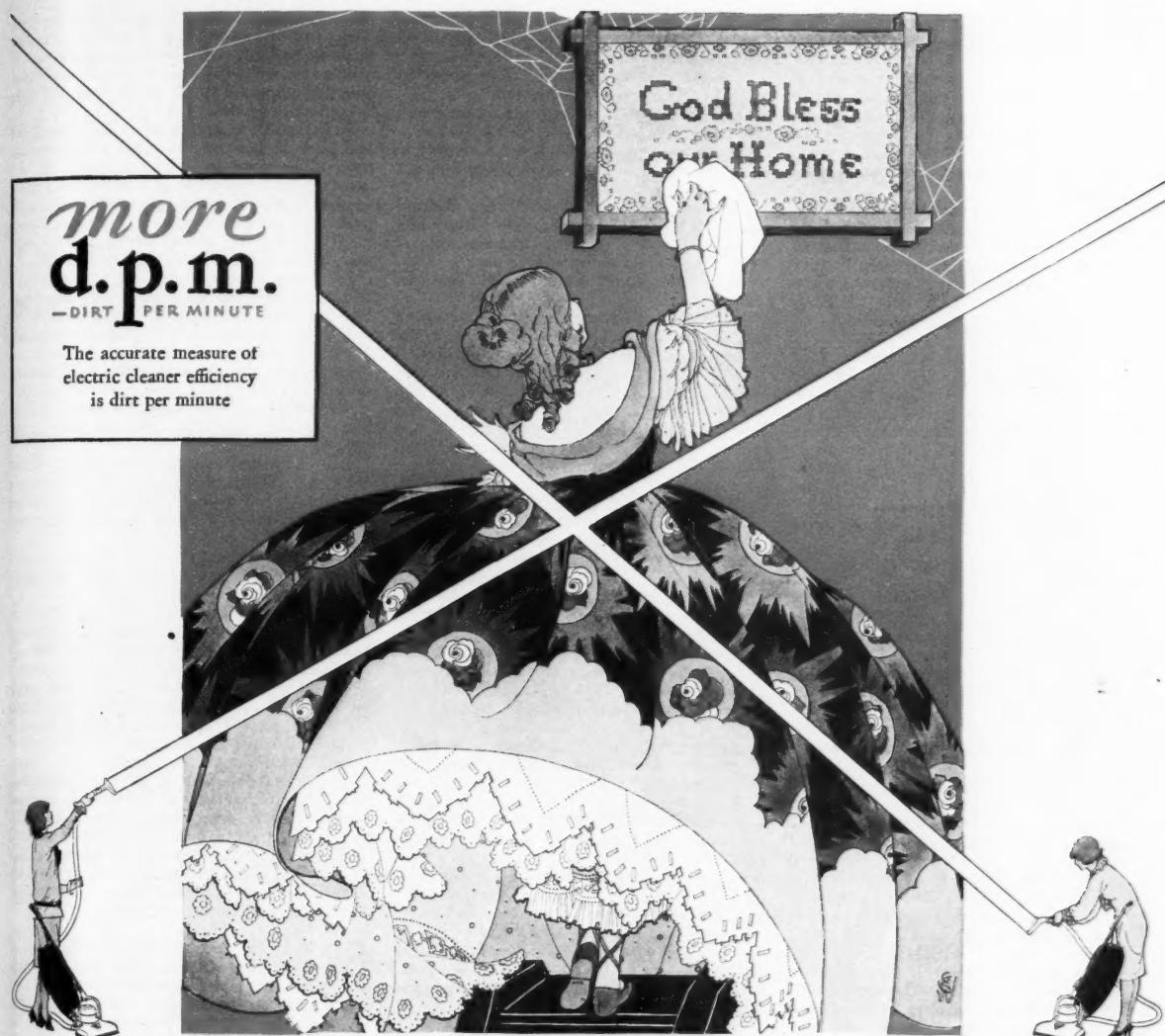
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House cleaning is easier nowthanks to The HOOVER Dusting Tools

HOW old-fashioned it seems—the tearing up of carpets, the carrying out of furniture, the beating of rugs and brushing of draperies that meant housecleaning a few years ago . . . Yet some women do it still. Such drudgery is quite unnecessary—thanks to Hoover Dusting Tools. They search out the dirt from every crack and corner, clean thoroughly and quickly overstuffed furniture, hangings and door frames—all the difficult, hard-to-get-at places.

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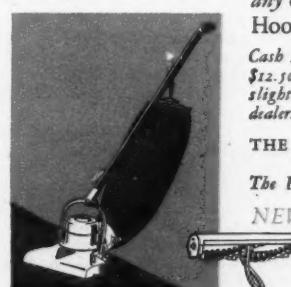
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what he was, with such a woman as wife. She thought Charlotte pretty and smart and rather engaging, but believed her to be hard and frivolous, the last wife in the world for a sensitive, idealistic man such as she thought Stephen to be. And she was better informed about his financial circumstances than he dreamed. She had even tactfully kept collectors who came to the office from the attention of either Stephen or his superiors.

"I'd love to go," she told him, and he felt oddly elated and at the same time regretful.

He had no business to make women friends.

However, it was done, and presently they walked out of the office-building together and parted on the street corner with, on Eve's part, a friendly, understanding smile.

EVE made her way uptown to the Park Avenue apartment in which Mrs. Bedford lived. By all the laws of Gotham, Mrs. Bedford should not be gracing the city with her presence at this unseasonable time, and Eve knew it. And she knew, also, why her mother had broken those laws, why she would continue to break them. And Eve's heart was sick within her because she knew.

She found her mother lying on a couch in the great living-room, a linen bandage over her eyes, her long, slender figure more or less concealed by an elaborate Chinese pajama negligée.

The discreet butler, ushering Eve in, departed, and Mrs. Bedford removed the bandage, dropped it into a bowl of ice and astringent, and looked at her daughter.

"You're late, Eve."

"I've been working."

"Oh, I suppose so. It's too absurd. People still talk, you know. Someone is forever asking why you don't live with me. If Thorpe should hear it—"

Eve sat down in a low chair and took her mother's pretty, nervous hand in her own.

"Have you a headache?"

"No, not exactly. My eyes trouble me—I was out late—the smoke in the place was as thick as pea soup," Stella Bedford explained sketchily. She swung her black satin legs to the floor and touched the jade buttons on the cloth-of-gold jacket. "I didn't dress," she said unnecessarily.

Later, across the candles and flowers on the dinner table, Eve surveyed her mother gravely. It came to her as a fresh shock every time she saw her, the extraordinary beauty which Mrs. Bedford still possessed and which she preserved and worshiped with fantastic and costly rites. She was tall, slim; the lines of her body were heart-breakingly lovely. Her eyes were as gray as Eve's eyes, and her close-cut hair as black. But there the likeness ended. She had a heart-shaped face and a mouth dreaming sensuously in luscious curves of red. Her tanned skin was white and clear, her nose and ears a triumph of delicate modeling. And her look was sullen, her charm brooding.

She was twenty years older than her daughter and Eve was twenty-two. Anyone would have thought them to be sisters. One of Mrs. Bedford's outstanding grievances against her child was that she had never been able to force her to call her Stella or at least, for pity's sake, by some caressing nickname—something less brutally dating and damning than "Mother."

Now Stella played with her very good food and talked about the plays she had seen. When the man servant had left the room she complained irritably:

"Your stepfather is behind—four days—in his payment this month. He doesn't seem to realize that I have bills to meet."

Eve said nothing. There seemed nothing to say. Her mother added angrily:

"I'm always in debt!"

When they had returned to the living-room for coffee and cigarettes, she asked Eve suddenly:

"After all, I don't think Thorpe would mind so much if he knew you wouldn't live with me. He always said you were an independent minx. Remember? He's always liked you, too. You're a fool not to keep up with him. He'd

be sure to leave you something—he can't live forever, not at the rate he lives—if only, Eve, you'd be a little diplomatic!"

"I don't care to see him," Eve answered quietly. "You know that, Mother."

"It's nothing to me," her mother answered, carelessly cold. "I was just telling you something for your own good. I won't be able to leave you much—I can't save. Lord knows I try."

Eve was silent. Death and Stella Bedford seemed a long way apart. She looked idly about the beautiful room in which every clever light was subdued to flatter its owner.

"How is the office?" asked Mrs. Bedford, not really caring.

"All right. I've been working overtime a good deal. We've been rushed—even in the dull season. It's an import concern, you know."

"When you talk like that you look like your father!" Mrs. Bedford commented suddenly. Then she was silent. She was remembering, against her will, the light-hearted boy she had romantically loved and ridiculously married. That boy had turned very soon into a stranger, an anxious and repressed man. Eve's father. He had died so soon after the child's birth that Eve knew of him only from pictures, legends.

Stella shuddered under the cloth of gold. She was thinking of the meager life insurance, the struggle, the little support her own and Harkness' family had been able to give her and the child—the dull, strained visiting between one and the other. And then Thorpe Bedford had happened along and had seen her, just as she was flowering into that unusual beauty—a beauty which, maturing rather late, no amount of grief or poverty or anxiety had dimmed.

The electric bell rang. Eve looked instantly toward her mother, apprehension at her heart.

Mrs. Bedford flushed.

"I'm sorry—it's Harry. I hadn't meant him to come here tonight, of course—I wanted you all to myself," she added hastily, "but he called me up just before you came in. Business. He has been investing some money for me."

"Then you'll lose it," Eve remarked.

Her mother, a finger gesturing toward her lips, flung a look of anger toward her, gray arrows. "You're so unfair," she whispered breathlessly, and halted as the door opened and Harry Stoddard came in.

He was about thirty-four years old. A superbly built man, very blond. If his mouth and chin were weak and yielding, you forgot it when you saw his gay, imploring eyes and the little swagger of his carriage, as winning as the braggart walk of a small boy. Even Eve, whom he had deeply wronged, could not hate him. He was as charming as Lancelot and as unstable as water.

"Well, Stella!"

He crossed the room and kissed the hand Stella Bedford held out to him. An absurd, un-American gesture. Yet so very well done, so utterly engaging. Then he turned to Eve and held out his own hand to her.

"But this is really marvelous," he told her, smiling with unaffected pleasure. "Where on earth do you keep yourself, Eve? I never see you—I've asked Stella again and again."

Hating herself, Eve laid her hand in his. What else could she do? she thought despairingly. He was bound to ignore the basic situation where she was concerned. He could do nothing else. Neither could she. And, she asked herself, not for the first time, did she know that she knew? Could he be such a fool as to think her—blind, witless?

"I've been very busy," she answered quietly. "How are you, Harry?"

"Oh, wretched, as usual," he replied gaily, sitting down between them, looking from one pretty woman to the other, the portrait of as healthy and satisfied a man as could be found in the entire city. "I'm working, too. What, you didn't know it? I thought it had been trumpeted abroad, that world-shaking event! Well, it doesn't amount to anything, really. I've a friend in the brokerage way who sends

me out to lunch at my own clubs in order that I may entice unwary men into buying something we call gilt-edged securities. Haven't a child's idea what that means myself, and how long this desperate attack of industry will last, heaven alone knows. I don't."

Stella smiled at him lazily. The change in her since he entered the room was perfectly perceptible. She looked as indolent, as relaxed and as complacent as a cat before a half-finished saucer of cream. Eve turned her eyes from that unmerciful betrayal. It was dreadful, it was terribly, terribly wrong, and yet, in a way, it was pitiful.

She listened, without hearing, to her mother and Stoddard talking, gossiping, laughing. She answered mechanically the questions he put to her, friendly questions and interested. She fully appreciated the effort he made to draw her into the conversational circle; the endeavor to skim lightly, easily over the surface of the situation itself. But she couldn't help him—couldn't play up. She felt stifled, oppressed, almost ill.

Eve endured it as long as she could. Presently, her resistance snapping, she rose to go. Stella made no attempt to detain her. But Stoddard fretted a little, seeming sincerely disappointed.

"But why not stay? I'll take you home after. One sees you so rarely. Upon my word, it's not kind of you, Eve."

Yet she escaped from him and his mistaken, his horrible kindness and went out—reached the street. Her sensitive lips could still feel the smooth, cool touch of her mother's fragrant cheek. She shuddered a little . . . That tended, lovely skin, the whole mind and soul and body of the elder woman abandoned to—

At eighteen, four years ago, she had learned that Harry Stoddard was her mother's lover. How she had learned it, in what appalling, branding, unforgettable circumstances, she had tried to forget. She tried never to think of it. It had been then that she had left Mrs. Bedford and gone to work. Fortunately she had a profession; had taken a secretarial course to fill up her time since leaving school at seventeen, soon after her mother's divorce.

SHE had said nothing to Stella Bedford of her discovery—the most terrible discovery any girl could make, and one which had matured her far beyond her years. But Mrs. Bedford knew, as any woman would, and her shameful knowledge withheld her from any show of maternal authority regarding Eve's radical plans. She had been forced to let the girl go and live for a time at a club for working women; had been obliged to see her grow tired and shabby.

The secretarial course had been accepted by Mrs. Bedford, originally, as one of the smart things girls did nowadays. She had never dreamed that Eve would put it to a practical use. She had thought to give her the one "serious" year, then take her abroad, and after an expensive débüt at home, marry her off to some man who would appreciate her quiet charm, her good breeding, her really fine mind. That Eve had not inherited her own exceptional beauty was a source of complaint to her mother, and yet, as she was inordinately vain, a source of satisfaction as well.

But Eve had crashed through the thin structure of her mother's plans for her, and Stella had been compelled to sit back and say nothing. For the lightest word might be a rope that would drag the entire situation into open daylight. That much Stella knew.

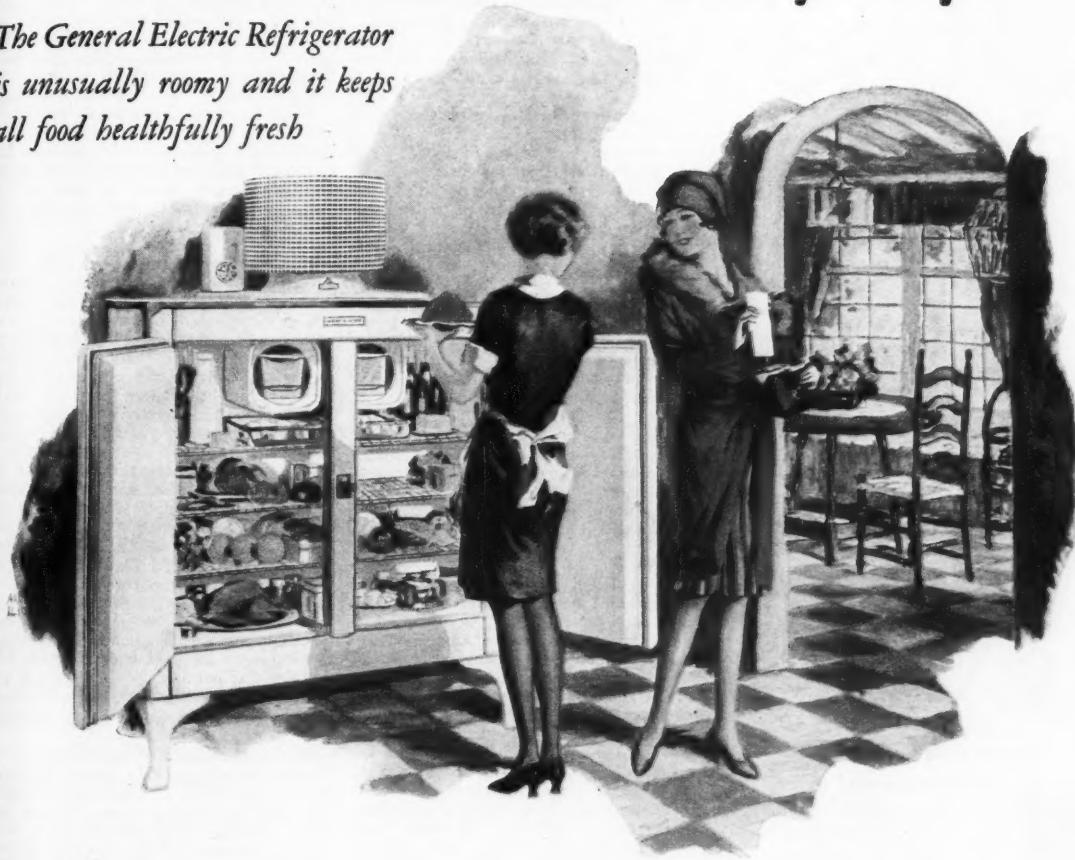
So Eve had gone her way and Stella had gone hers—which was the gay, unreliable, exciting way of Harry Stoddard, eight years her junior.

Eve breathed deep, away from the apartment. The air in the street was hot and dry and dusty, but she breathed it as gratefully as if it had blown straight from snow-fields, from mountains and pine forests.

In the apartment Eve had quitted, Mrs. Bedford was contemplating Harry Stoddard with some irritation. He was fidgeting with the dials of an elaborately concealed radio,

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*The General Electric Refrigerator
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now pulling snatches of jazz, of lectures, of vocal music into the room, and as quickly erasing, replacing, banishing them.

Stella put her hands over her ears.

"Harry! Do stop that!"

"Oh, I'm sorry!"

He turned instantly, smiled at her and wandered over to where she sat. Bending down, he kissed her lightly on the nape of the neck.

He felt a little shiver run through her that his most casual touch awakened. He was not elated by it. He was not particularly proud of his hold over her. Once it had excited him tremendously—had made him feel like a god. But now—

He dropped down beside her on the couch and lighted a cigaret.

"I didn't mean you and Eve to meet."

"Why not?" he asked, astonished.

She couldn't answer truthfully. So she replied evasively, "Oh, she doesn't approve of my friends any more."

"I'd be sorry to think she included me in her disapproval. I like her—she's a darned nice girl."

As a matter of fact, incredible as it seems, he did not dream that Eve "knew anything." All his imagination—and he had a great deal—ran to the charming manner in which he made love. Had he even suspected Eve's knowledge, he would have been genuinely horrified and regretful.

"You haven't been here for over a week."

"Busy—don't laugh, Stella—really busy! Then out in Westchester. You knew that, darling."

"Yes, I knew. But you only wrote once. It's been lonely. I came to town—thinking—but you'd left. Did you meet anyone you liked, anyone—new?"

"Oh, a couple of girls—athletic type, flat-footed, hearty—I never could endure it," he answered carelessly.

Her gray eyes searched him, avid, anxious. She lived in a continual nightmare of terror that some younger woman would take him from her. She was too clever to show her dread and her anticipatory jealousy, but it ate at her like a cancer—it threatened to age her.

Youth—and innocence—twin menaces.

He was getting tired of her. She knew it. He was as charming to her as ever—even more so. But he was tiring. She thought, frantically, desperately, ceaselessly, menacing her beauty by her constant preoccupation, that it didn't really matter if he did tire—a little. It had lasted four years now. You couldn't expect concert pitch forever—over even as long a period. No, it didn't matter, just as long as he met no one else—no young girl—inexperienced.

He often told her he didn't like youth and innocence. But she knew men. She hadn't believed him.

At intervals he still asked her to marry him. Longer intervals now than formerly. If only she could bring herself to do it! But she could not. Harry's inherited income was small—entirely inadequate. He lived up to and beyond it. Work, seriously, he could not. And if Stella Bedford married, it meant that her alimony would cease.

No, she could not live on Harry's income—he could barely live on it himself. To marry him would mean the instant sacrifice of all that she loved—her comfort, her luxuries, clothes, jewels, motor-cars, travel. She had saved nothing. She was truly, as she had told Eve, always in debt. Twice since their divorce, Bedford, in a mood of tolerance and irony, had come to her rescue with what he called an extra dividend on her wise investment. He imagined, of course, that she supported Eve as well as herself on what he allowed her.

No, she could not marry Harry Stoddard, insane as she was about him. To marry him would be to lose him completely, for she would lose her beauty—the beauty which was all she had with which to hold him. The worship by which she placated the idol of her alluring flesh was costly worship, and she must practice eternal vigilance at the perfumed altars.

Now that Eve was gone she exerted herself

to amuse Stoddard. She was a rather witty woman in a cruel, sleek way, and the man enjoyed, rather against his weakened will, the facility she had for being entertaining at someone else's expense. He was genuinely fond of her, tiring though he was of her claim upon him.

Basically, he was decent, even chivalrous enough never to blame her, even to himself, for the situation. Yet he could have done so, and with considerable truth. He had drifted into the affair, and now he discovered that he could not as easily, as lightly drift out of it again. All his urging marriage upon her had been, latterly, perfunctory enough. Mere props to bolster up his waning self-respect.

While Eve walked uptown to clear her lungs and mind of the atmosphere she had left, Stella Bedford and her lover sat together in the apartment made possible by Thorpe Bedford's money and tried to conceal from each other that the one was frantic with fear and the other sodden with boredom.

Dining, the following night, with Stephen Dane at the quiet, smart French place in the Forties to which he had taken her, talking to him of the office, of the weather, of the latest newspaper sensation, Eve found herself thinking, in astonishment, "How really good-looking he is. I hadn't noticed. I wonder why."

But he was more alive that night than she had ever seen him. His day had gone well, and for the first time in years he had had something to look forward to at the end of it. Excellent food, competent service, and music which had a certain demodified elegance of sound had combined to relax his taut nerves and to brighten his eyes, intensify his smile.

He felt absurdly care-free and was conscious of it. He could forget Charlotte, could forget the anxieties which gnawed at him like lean rats—could even forget himself.

A belated dinner party came in. Stephen followed them with his glance, idly enough, let them register subconsciously. Three or four well-dressed, petulant-looking women, one of them extraordinarily pretty—he'd seen her before somewhere—and men to match, good-looking, well-groomed men.

One of them was what Stephen instantly classified as a type. The Successful Man. A man of fifty-odd, tall, with an outward curve at the waist-line, with a smooth-shaven, heavy, florid face and thick hair brushed to sleek silver. He passed them, his eyes roving curiously over the room. They were eyes, Stephen noticed, hard as steel and the color of steel. But the casual onlooker would be apt to discount their piercing steadiness because of the discolored puffs beneath them.

"That blond woman," Stephen remembered aloud, "is Angele Cordova, the motion-picture actress. Name's probably Maggie Smith. I wonder," he went on, not caring, "who the man is—the big man. He's the host, obviously."

The party was arranging itself at a table near by. There were hovering waiters and an obsequious captain, menu in hand. The big man was nodding as the wasp-waisted Latin bent to him. He'd already ordered, apparently—this consultation was evidently a matter of drinks. One of the women said:

"Not for me. I'm on the wagon, Thorpe, old dear."

Thorpe!

Stephen looked quickly at Eve. As if in answer, she nodded.

"Yes—Mr. Bedford. I haven't seen him—since—He's not changed."

Stephen said quickly: "We can go. I'll get my check."

"It doesn't matter," Eve murmured. Yet it mattered a good deal. She was as fastidious in her thoughts as in her person, and it distressed her to see her stepfather. She had too recently seen his successor.

While Stephen beckoned a waiter, took the slip from the plate, reached for his bill-fold, she put on her gloves, her eyes on the table. She had nothing against Bedford—nothing definite, that is. She had liked him as a child—he had been generous, even sympathetic. She

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had despised him when, adolescent, she had witnessed his laxness, his drinking, had been forced to hear some of the recriminations her mother had flung at him. The maid who had been dismissed. The woman who had been her mother's temporary best friend. The girl on the boat the last time Bedford and his wife and his wife's daughter had gone abroad together.

She had despised him, then, all the hard rectitude of her unyielding youth sitting in judgment. And now she felt that she could hate him because of what had happened to the wife who divorced him for infidelity. If it hadn't been for the careless generosity of the alimony, there would have been no Harry Stoddard. And yet, Eve thought confusedly, surely her mother was entitled to the support of a man who had not kept his vows.

It was all a muddle. She hoped now that Bedford would not see her.

But he had seen her. He had risen—was making his way to their table.

"Eve!" He held out his big, capable, over-manicured hand to her. "Eve, of all people!"

His rather sullen, heavy face was quite changed, lighted into friendliness, great magnetism. Eve smiled at him and put her hand in his. She might despise him, might feel that she could hate him, yet she still liked him—somehow.

She made the introductions and Bedford looked sharply, curiously at Stephen. He rather approved of him—a quiet young man with a firm, somewhat haggard face—an unsuccessful man, Bedford thought, summing up Stephen's self-betraying features, too nervously fibered, too weak, in Bedford's sense, to go far—still in Bedford's sense. But because the boy was with Eve he interested Bedford.

He sat down beside Eve on the long narrow seat which ran along the wall.

"What are you doing? How is your mother?" he asked with the utmost casualness. "You're not looking very well—too thin. What is it—too many parties? Tell me all about yourself—I'm glad to see you. Why do you never come near me, Eve?"

His tone accused her, a little wistfully. He had always liked Stella's daughter.

Now his eyes were on her, appraising, weighing. She was, he decided, a very attractive young woman. She hadn't her mother's looks, of course, but she had something infinitely interesting to Thorpe Bedford because he met with it so rarely—distinction, aloofness, impersonality.

Eve said quietly: "Mother's very well, thank you. No, I haven't been dancing myself thin. I'm working—in an importing office. I'm Mr. Dane's secretary," she went on.

Bedford's thin skin flushed. He was hotly angry. Eve—working? What was Stella about—was she out of her mind?

He looked toward Stephen again. The commonplace story—the secretary and her boss? He shook his head, half closed his eyes. No, that wasn't it. This fellow, inconspicuous, likable, wasn't the type. Nor was Eve. Were they planning to be married or anything so foolish? His thoughts ran on, looking, as always, ahead. It was that quality of picking the future to pieces, balancing its possibilities, that had made Thorpe Bedford rich—had made him feared.

He said lightly: "All news to me. You might have let me know. I need a good secretary. I always do."

He turned to Stephen and talked to him for a moment. Business—the outlook for importers in Stephen's own line. He talked rapidly, was brilliant and emphatic.

Eve watched, listened. She had been momentarily embarrassed—had not known what to call this man. As a baby she had called him Father. She was quite a large girl before she had been told that he was not her father. And with a curious obstinacy, born of her shock and her instinct that somehow she had been cheated, she had dropped the more intimate term—had called him Uncle—Uncle Thorpe.

Now, "Mr. Bedford" seemed ridiculous.

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Well, she would simply avoid any use of his name at all.

He left them presently, with genuine reluctance. But first he asked her pointblank where she was living and she told him. She wouldn't lie, and it wasn't in her to evade. His heavy brows, darker than his hair, drew down when he heard the address, visualized the neighborhood. He knew where Stella lived. What had happened between them? Confound it, the girl was worth a dozen of Stella! He had always marveled that Stella had been able to produce the child, and had even speculated a little upon the child's dead father.

His heavy, square chin thrust out, he demanded: "If I call you up, perhaps you'll have dinner with me?"

He said it rather low. Eve smiled and shook her head very slightly. Her eyes went directly to his and implored him. "Don't ask me," her eyes said, "don't try to be kind. It isn't any use. Can't you see the situation?"

Bedford went back to his party, abstracted enough. The blond girl of the cinema pouted. "What's the matter, Thorpe? Who's that girl?"

He grinned, like a small boy, with an impish charm. "My daughter."

Angele Cordova shrieked. "Your—daughter! You lie," she said dramatically. "You've never had one."

"Oh, as to that, how do I know?" he asked her, faintly malicious. "But this one—my wife's daughter, to be exact. To be more exact, my second and ex-wife's."

Angele didn't quite believe him. She never did. But she was trying very hard to land this very wary, very important goldfish. She knew he was tired of the red-headed woman across the table. She thought—why not? He had backed her lately—had used his influence, but, she felt vaguely, laughing a little all the time.

The drinks were there. The talk became general, a little loud.

Bedford was not at all himself that evening. He found himself thinking of Eve. Well, no use to try to see her, to try to find out what had happened between her and that empty, beautiful woman, her mother. Not so good for Stella to have Eve working, he fancied—Stella was riddled with vanity and the sense of her own importance. He swore under his breath and then laughed. Much of his interest in Stella's financial situation had been because of Eve. He'd thought that at least the girl was provided for, and that if she married he'd give her an income for a wedding present.

At the next table a woman was saying de-lightedly: "Wasn't that Stephen Dane who just went out? I wonder who the girl is. Charlotte's away. Stephen, of all people! Who'd have thought it?"

Later, on her own doorstep, Eve was saying: "Such a nice evening. Thank you so much, Mr. Dane."

This time he had her handclasp as well as her smile and the straight glance of her fine eyes. He went home to an apartment which was hot and dusty and had the close smell of un-lived-in rooms, unopened to the air. He undressed, amazed to hear himself whistle. Why was he so happy, unreasoningly so? Because he'd taken Eve Harkness to dinner? Because he was to see her again tomorrow?

Ridiculous, unthinkable! He must be going crazy—just because a woman was friendly, was interested in his labored small talk, was serene . . .

About that time at a night club a woman was saying to a friend:

"I keep remembering seeing Stephen Dane—with that girl. I wonder who she was. That was Thorpe Bedford who went to their table and stayed talking. Jimmy said so. The Bedford, you know. I wonder. I must write and ask Helene. She's Charlotte's closest friend. I don't suppose there's anything in it—but Stephen Dane! He's too moral to live, you know. Wouldn't it be a joke if—"

She wasn't a very close friend of either Helene Carter's or Charlotte Dane's. She



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thought herself a very nice woman. She wouldn't make trouble for anyone, not for the world. She was well off and very charitable. A very nice woman, indeed. A well-dressed, insignificant spider to weave so tangled a web . . .

The next morning, sitting down at her desk, she spun the first thread.

Helene, receiving the letter, read it twice. Her expression did not change, but once she looked unreadably at Charlotte. Then she passed the letter to her.

They were sitting in a morning room which gave on a miraculous garden. The scent of roses came heavily through the open windows.

"You see," commented Helene carefully, "I'm not so dumb, after all."

Charlotte looked up from the letter. Her

In Stephen Dane's friendship for his secretary, Eve Harkness, his wife finds a weapon with which to threaten him if he does not agree to give her a divorce—in Next Month's instalment of Faith Baldwin's Novel of Today

face was contorted with anger and amazement. "At Jean-Louis', of all places!" she ejaculated. "We hardly ever go there. Stephen says it's too expensive!"

Helene answered smoothly: "You figure differently when it isn't your wife, my dear. Well, my advice to you is—go slow. If you're clever, in the end you'll get what you want and he'll pay for it."

"He'll pay!" repeated Charlotte furiously. Stephen—Miss Harkness—at Jean-Louis'—"obviously very much engrossed in each other," Helene's correspondent had written.

Charlotte looked out through the long windows at the rose garden. But her eyes saw nothing of its glowing color. She saw—almost within her reach—freedom . . .

Olive Brand

(Continued from page 49)

they obscured all sharp demarcation of mine and thine. They have a way of doing that. Besides, as I guessed, the amount he was allowing her could not have seemed so much to herself or him. Was he not truly rich?

I do recall asking her whether, once the three years were up, she would go back to him, and her saying that she wouldn't, and adding that by that time, though, he might not want her so much any more, either—a thought that struck me as both keen and cool. Even so, I liked her. There was so much that was playful, graceful, and, above all, incalculable, in all that she did and said.

But just the same, the luncheon, with its romantic overtures, came to nothing, and at about five in the afternoon I departed, not to see her again for months. Then, on a winter afternoon, she telephoned that she was trying to sublet her apartment for the remainder of her lease, which had something over a year to run. Also to sell her furniture and her car. With the proceeds she proposed to take a smaller place—a much smaller place. Now she wanted to be alone, she said, in order to test whether she could write. Meanwhile, and if possible, she proposed to get a divorce, or let her husband get one.

It was not long before she found a place, and moved, and then I was invited to come and see her. It was more north, near One Hundred and Ninetieth Street, in a newer and less attractive section, much poorer. The building was a five-story affair, with a very small elevator. The cost, I figured, could not be more than thirty-five or forty dollars a month.

Her place was two flights up and consisted of a small living-room, bedroom, kitchenette and bath. But books crowded the walls of the living-room and bedroom. Her interesting books! Nearly all of the remaining space was taken by her piano, a phonograph, and a typewriter. A snug fit. From the window of her kitchen—but from nowhere else—one obtained a rather charming view of the upper city.

I cannot say that she looked or seemed any more practical or sane here than she had in the other place. Rather, the dreamer and poet that she really was, but slowly evolving. For, as I thought I saw, she was one who was truly taken with the virus of the ideal and never again in her life would rest in purely material things. They were not like her, any more. As she insisted now, she was anxious to say or do something that would reflect her own point of view, and by that means make her own way in life. I liked her much better.

By degrees, also, I noticed that her wardrobe grew simpler—a thought that did not sadden me, seeing that she had never needed all she had in the first instance. Next—and this was a fact that interested me and must have impressed her, too—was that although here she had none of the facilities for offering that hospitality which had characterized her on Riverside Drive, still she was followed by as

interesting a group of people as ever I saw in leash to any temperament in New York—editors, writers, artists, propagandists, socialists, anarchists, conservatives, as you will.

But it was now when she was seeking to sever herself from the old life that her real troubles began. For her husband, who had come to New York not long before she moved this time, had conveyed to her the fact that all along he had been aware of the type of life she had been leading, and that unless she now returned to him he would furnish her with no more money and would expose her, not only to her parents in the West but to the public.

He had changed his mind, he said. Her conduct in his absence and on his money had completely alienated him. She was this, she was that. Still, as anyone could see, he still cared for her in some twisted, erratic way. For, as he now stated, as bad as she was, and as determined as he was to punish her, still, assuming that she would return to him and "behave" herself, he would not act in the drastic fashion in which he had just said he would.

Reunion did not come about. True, he did annoy and even frighten her, causing her, as she plainly evinced from time to time, intense mental anguish. Her mail was intercepted and opened. Her telephone wire tapped and all messages coming to her relayed to him. Brand sought to and did, to a certain extent, make a pariah of her, even though he was still willing to take her back.

One of the things he did effect was this: Since he was dogging her every move, as it were, it became necessary for her to flee, and this time by night, to a very small apartment on the East Side, which had no telephone to watch, and where she lived under another name.

Incidentally, she now paid a return visit to her parents in Salt Lake, in order to forestall, if possible, the damaging attacks she felt certain he was about to make. But, as she explained afterwards, nothing had been gained by that, not even the mental ease of her parents in regard to her. For, plainly, by now, they looked upon her as a failure, her husband as the epitome of law and order and all worth-while forms.

But that small apartment on the upper East Side! And how she now contrasted with her old self! I recall meeting her once in First Avenue, near Sixty-sixth Street. She wore a little gingham house-dress and was carrying some groceries and a magazine in a basket. Except as to fine feathers, she had not changed much; looked even more interesting to me in that swarming upper East Side street than she did on the Drive. Invited to see her new place, I trudged up three flights of slate steps to a combination kitchen and dining-room, with a living-room attached. But they looked over the East River, a gracious view, and they were clean. Also, there were her books and a typewriter and a piano.

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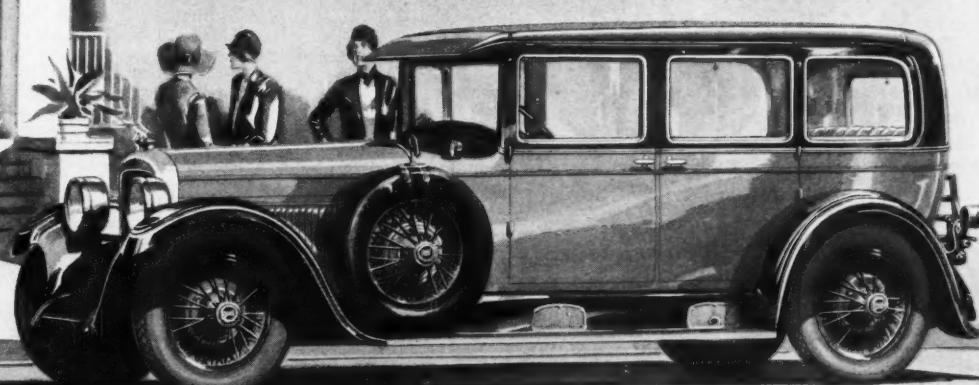
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Sal Hepatica



She explained that her husband's actions had caused her to fear for her friends, and so it was best to hide from all. But she was writing now, or trying to—short stories, poems, essays, a play. And if anything should ever come of her efforts in a public way, well then, she would be able to live, and happily, by herself or with someone, but mentally and spiritually free, or so she seemed to think.

Yet from thence on, for a time at least, her life seemed to grow darker rather than brighter. According to her, before actually filing suit, Brand returned to her parents and so filled them with tales of her present state that for the time being, at any rate, they would not even communicate with her. Next, he attached the lease and contents of her old apartment. Worse, as I could see, she had no clear idea as to what she could do or what it is that the public really cares for.

During the first year of this East Side life, therefore, her piano and phonograph disappeared, and she seemed to be in danger of real want. Certainly, as I saw it, she was beginning to pay a very fair price for her convictions and her ideals. And then . . .

One day through the mail and while she was still living on the East Side, I received a poem. It was labeled "To You," and caused me to pause, to understand, to know, that this woman could most surely distinguish herself if she would—not in the petty little passing fiction field but in some broader walk of thought and inspiration, where live and dream and execute those who most truly influence the world. I offer the poem (in part) in evidence:

Out
Amid endless levelness, a cheerless span,
I find you.

Apart . . .
Alone . . .
Missing
What is not there.

Out
In lightlessness
Where sense pales to sensuality,
Where both lapse to dream,
Dream dies to night,
And night dispels to nothingness,
I find you.

Fixed.
Paling with the paling dream,
A nihilistic acolyte
Of night and nothingness,
Needing
What is not there.

Out
On the breast of barrenness,
I find you,
Rooted.
Not born to what is there.
Wishing . . .
What is not there.

Amid a parching seethingness,
A reeking loneliness,
I find you.
Breaking . . .
Athirst . . .
Insatiate!

In all, there were twenty stanzas, yet apart from telling her how much I thought of it—how truly sensitive to, and understanding of life I knew it to be—it led to nothing more than that warm friendship that already existed between us. She knew that I saw her for what she was—the aspirant, the dreamer, one who looked out with wide, clear, sensitive eyes upon the mystery of life and paused to wonder at and meditate upon now this, now that, and yet to know that life is not to be understood—that for man it remains, and must remain, an insoluble secret, his one approach via the door of beauty.

Farther back I asked you to remember a certain individual—one of the group by which I found her surrounded at the dinner in The Black Cat where I first met her. An interesting individual this—worthy, as time was to prove (to me, at least), of a separate paper.

And yet it can never be written. I can only, and finally, deal with him here. But among so many whom I encountered and entertained, in New York, Jethro was one who fixed himself in my mind, made a strong personal impression.

And yet exactly why, I sometimes asked myself. Assuredly he was not of a highly imaginative turn. Or was he? A little gross, a little material in his tastes, strong for parties, dinners, first nights, conventional doings in society and theatrical and bohemian circles, and yet also, as anyone could tell after an hour with him, a most amazingly well-informed man, and one who went to primary sources in history, science and the arts for the information which guided him and gave him his place as an editor and journalist. But without, as I often thought, a certain valuable delicacy or a sensitivity, without which . . . well . . . And yet with something a little rueful about him too, as though, at times, and in the face of the upstanding, two-fisted animality, and argumentative and critical vigor of him, one sensed or heard something—a sorrowful little voice underground—a low, half-captured, half-evasive melody, or mood, or cry. I used to wonder.

And now one day, some seven months after the poem and the difficulties which had driven Olive Brand to the East Side, and when, understandably enough, seeing that I had been South for the winter, I had not seen her in four months, there was a knock at my studio door, and outside it stood Jethro. He had just learned that I was back. He had something of importance to him that he wished to communicate to me.

"You're one of Olive's best friends, I know," he began.

"I hope so," I replied.

"Well, you don't know it, but we've been seeing a great deal of each other of late . . . Well, we're going to get married, as soon as a little business in connection with her divorce can be arranged. It's almost settled now, and we want you to stand up with us, act as best man, if you will, when the time comes. She wants you to do it," and he looked at me as much as to say: "This must be a surprise to you, I know, but so it is."

"Sure! Delighted! Congratulations!" I answered. "Say as much to Olive. But how about this, anyhow? I thought she couldn't get a divorce. What about the Honorable Henry B. Brand?"

"All done and fixed," he said. "The trouble with Olive is that she's a bad manager. She makes herself look worse than she is, and all because she hasn't managed right. But that's neither here nor there. We're going to get married just the same."

"I'm straightening out her affairs for her. I've just been to see that husband of hers, but before I went I took care to get a lot of affidavits from people who know something about him as well as her, some of whom he approached with money, by the way. That wouldn't look well in those Spokane papers out there if it were published."

"Anyhow, I felt all the time that he was bluffing. I hired a couple of lawyers out there, and between us we made him see the light. I told him that I wanted to marry Olive. He finally agreed to let her get a divorce in Jersey, and it'll all be fixed in a little while now. That's why I came around to see you today."

You could have knocked me flat with a very light blow. I couldn't get it, as the saying goes, but I certainly looked upon it as a happy outcome for Olive.

They were married, and at the city hall of all places, by the city clerk, a friend of Jethro's and by virtue of his office legally entitled to tie the knot. I was there as best man, no less, and signed the certificate.

Before this, however, Jethro had taken an entire house on the upper West Side and with Olive's aid and supervision had furnished it. Books, books, books. A large, comfortable living-room, with a fireplace; a dining-room, a library and separate workrooms for Olive and Jethro on separate floors; several bedroom and bath suites; a new piano and phonograph.

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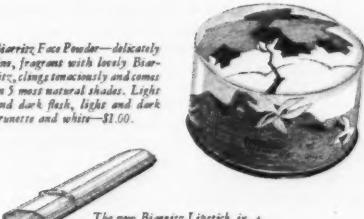
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And was I welcome there? They were always calling up to know when I was coming for dinner. But the sight of either in their respective rôles of faithful husband and wife used to make me laugh. For, like Olive, Jethro had led no simple life.

None the less, and from the beginning, I suspected, as well as sensed, that there was something more to this union than mere temperamental or emotional affinity, with all that that implies. For while Olive, as I knew, was not only sensitive but idealistic, and highly poetic, Jethro was not so much so—and even fumbling mentally at times. Hence what was it? What would it have been that first and last fixed her interest in him?

His mind? Was his mind as remarkable or as fascinating as hers? I knew it was not. His was a fine mind, and a well-furnished one, and it was accompanied by an expansive, generous, and pagan temperament. But even so, hers was a drifting, emotional, colorful, seeking thing that would not be likely to rest permanently anywhere. Or would it? As for his money, or his mental and physical assurance in the face of life and materiality, well, I could not really believe (especially after seeing Olive on the East Side) that he was so needful to her, if at all. And if not, then what?

Often I studied each critically, and especially when they were together in their new home. Knowing Jethro and his interest in all night doings anywhere, as well as Olive's naturally varietistic temperament, I was given to venturing thinly veiled commentaries.

"How do you explain all this, Olive? I thought you of all people would find the simple home life, this broom-and-duster stuff, a little, well, you know, say mentally insubstantial, or lacking in luster, maybe."

To which she would reply, as a rule, with her eyes only, or a quizzical, Mona Lisa-like smile. And such eyes—the long, dark, Oriental, and so undecipherable, eye. But once she said:

"Oh, there is more in Heaven and earth than is . . . you know."

"I thought as much," I replied.

And to Jethro, seeing him cooking in the kitchen one night, a white apron around his ample waist: "This is beyond me. How the all-night places must mourn the loss of their most enthusiastic patron!"

"In the first place," he replied, "I am basting a ham. In the second, you're trying to sow seeds of discord in this poppy patch. Have a heart!"

BUT for all my doubts they appeared to understand each other. And presently—in the course of a year—the underlying essence became more and more apparent. I had not sensed it, but before going over to journalism completely Jethro had had bright dreams of becoming a writer. Short stories, plays, essays, as I gathered afterward from Olive, had been essayed by him, but to no effectual result. And privily, for all his outward bravado, he had grieved. And that, as I now sensed, was the thing that I had noted in him but had not understood—the voiceless plaint of defeat.

On the other hand, Olive, while dreaming after the same fashion, had actually, and although much younger, achieved more. True, she had not achieved publication as yet, but in her desk were many poems, essays, some short stories and even a play that needed little more than reshaping, to give them their ultimate value.

And these things, read by Jethro, and their real import gathered, had combined with a genuine affection as well as admiration for her to bring about that devotion which had resulted in marriage.

She sensed his lacks, sympathized with his aspirations, and because of her affection for him had soon offered to cooperate with him in the labor of artistic production. They were to write plays, short stories, novels together.

Poetry and the essay forms—having singular moods and opinions which these forms would best, or most individually, convey—she reserved to herself. And he, interested in science,

philosophy, history, biography, and the like, preferred to reserve to himself certain constructive papers in those fields which he proposed to do. But really, in his case, the play and the short story—more particularly the play—came first.

And soon after their union they were hard at work on first one and then another, all of which had interest and force, and one of which presently, in the second year of their marriage, achieved production.

But the excitement in Jethro! And the satisfaction! And the intense adoration, mounting almost to idolatry, for his brilliant wife! Night carousing? Pooh! Solid work. Solid achievement. That was the thing!

But the days clock merrily, or dolefully, along, as you will. And time and chance happen to all of us. A year, two, three of this, with the gayest and most contented of groups centering around this new couple. And then, one day, the feelingless hand of Fate . . .

I called Jethro on the telephone one morning to seek certain information I desired, and in passing he announced that Olive was not feeling well. A little cold, he thought, but nothing serious . . . So long!

But the next afternoon he called me up to say that she was no better, worse even, and that he was becoming a little worried. She had developed a severe sore throat and some fever. There was a doctor coming now, and I promised to call at once. Later that same evening I did call, only to learn that Jethro had already removed her to a hospital, and that in case I wished to go there I would find her in a certain private room.

I hurried to the hospital and to my emotional relief I found her resting most comfortably and, because of Jethro's concern, amused. But, at that, she appeared to have a temperature, and privately Jethro informed me that the doctor feared pneumonia.

I jested with him about giving up so easily and returned to Olive, who talked only of getting up soon, of course. What nonsense. She was not nearly as ill as Jethro was determined to think. Why, in the past few weeks they had been planning a summer home on the Jersey coast, and nothing was to interfere with that. The following spring and summer, if I would, I was to visit them there. And so, a gay evening of talk.

But the next morning when I called, she was not so well—a little more fever—and that night she was babbling nonsense. A specialist had taken charge, and Jethro was depressed beyond words. He was waxy pale the while he pretended to hope. And the next day she was rational, but weaker. I called with flowers. We talked of various things, and now for the first time, since Jethro was not present, she appeared depressed. When I rallied her about her courage, she said:

"Oh, it isn't of myself I'm thinking. I feel sorry for Jeth. He's been so much better off with me."

Exactly, I thought, but aloud said: "I know it, Olive."

"I knew you did. You remember that poem I sent you?"

"I love it. It is beautiful, not because of me but because of you. I have it with me always."

"I wanted you to know. But I knew afterwards that it was a sort of farewell to you. You couldn't care for me enough, could you?"

"No, Olive," I replied, "not in that way. But you know how life is. We can't love where and when we would. But if you think I haven't thought you beautiful, or your mind and life wonderful . . . that I do not think so now . . ."

She took my hands and held them. "Oh, I know, I know," she said, "so I thought it was best to do something for Jeth. He needed me so."

"You have done everything for him," I said. "I have seen it."

"That is why I would like to go on," she said.

The next day she was irrational. And the next. There were no more conversations. And at five one afternoon Jethro telephoned that she had died at four.

And the effect on Jethro! Never again anywhere in all time or space would he be permitted to repeat or enjoy the delightful relationship which had so fortified him against the dicing of fate and the lapse of time. He had been getting along so well, so very well, with her, and she with him. And now this . . . And the big house with all her books, and his. Her music. Her writings.

I called frequently to sit with him and cheer him up, if possible, but soon found that he could not really endure the house any longer. True, he was going to bring on his mother and sister, move to a new scene, perhaps, try to pull himself together and go on with his work. But I noted, as time passed, and although he did bring on his mother and sister, and they moved, still he could not successfully resume where, jointly, they had left off.

Ah, no. He tried, I will admit. For something over a year, after the blow of her death had seemingly worn off, he wrote, wrote, wrote. But nothing came of it.

More and more, as I noticed, he seemed to be losing interest in everything. Life obtruded itself now not only as an insoluble, but, at times, as a wholly contemptible mystery. The brevity of everything!

THIS following fall I invited him to the country, only to receive, after ten days, a letter from his sister. For two weeks, she said, he had been ill—for ten days unconscious. The last conscious thing he had done was to read my letter and say that he would answer it when he got up. Since then, the aberration of fever, a temperature of 103 to 107, never less. And babbling of Olive, Olive, the days before he was married to her, and the days afterward.

At the house, when I reached it, was a mutual friend, who told me that just before Jethro's illness he had been with him at his place in the country. And unfortunately he had started drinking. Then a slight cold, then fever, and instantly aberration.

"A funny thing," he said, "the moment he was out of his head he began talking of that wife of his—Olive Brand, you know."

"Yes, I know," I said.

"He talked of her all the time."

"Interesting," I said.

And upstairs in his own home on a hospital bed—attendants, three doctors—there he was, babbling, babbling, babbling, as fever patients will. And now he was toasting someone—was everybody in on this?—glasses up! Next he was marshaling a group into a car. Were all ready? Well, come on then. Start. Next, he wanted to go home. He must go home. Olive said . . . "Olive—where are you, anyhow?" . . . Next, it was his mother or sister, or both, for whom he was calling.

I held his hand, looked, spoke. "Listen, Jeth, see here! You know me."

"Of course, I know you," he replied, his eyes clearing for a second. "It's . . ." and he spoke my name. It was farewell.

Fourteen more days of brain fever—with this babbling—and still life, but how thinning and wearing. I was made sick as well as sad. The brevity of life. Its meaninglessness. Its cruelty.

"A queer thing," his sister said to me one day shortly after I first went there. "This thing began just as Olive's did, with a slight sore throat and then this fever. On the sixth day, which was the day she died, we didn't expect him to live. His strength was nearly gone. And he talked of her all the time. I don't know what caused him to rally."

But then on the twenty-ninth day of his fever, he did die—worn out by fever—and irrational all the time. On the way to his home I had said to the taxi driver: "Go through the park, across One Hundred and Tenth, and up Broadway." Instead, to my surprise, he turned in at Morningside Heights and directly under the window of the hospital room in which Olive died. But I was not aware of it until, on looking up, there it was. And then I said: "Olive, Olive. Can it really be that you would call him? Are you that sorry?"

A Slip of the Knife by Robert Hichens (Continued from page 93)

except for the flooring, I believe. He bought the bit of land it stands on and just had it brought here and set up as you see it."

"Doesn't he have visitors?"

"Never, sir."

"What does he do?"

"Walks about, sir. And he reads a lot, they do say, and paints a bit now and then. He don't make any debts. There's nothing against him, nothing whatever."

"Doesn't anyone who comes here to stay try to get to know him?"

"No, sir. Why should they?"

I had no answer to that.

"But the clergyman. You say there's a village called Brigg. Hasn't the clergyman—"

"Oh, yes, sir, he's been, and the clergyman here, Mr. Powting, he's been. But Mr. Blow, he don't hold with the clergy."

"Well—the doctor?"

"Mr. Blow's never ill, sir. And I believe he's all against doctors."

Doesn't hold with the clergy and is all against doctors! I left Mrs. Marsh that night wondering quite a lot about Mr. Blow.

Our impressions, sudden and vital, are sometimes very sharp. Something Mrs. Marsh had said about the dweller in the bungalow had backed up an impression of mine. She had expressed the conviction that he was afraid of people and yet longed for company. During my very brief interview with him I had felt that he was afraid of me, but also that if it had not been for his fear of me he would have been glad to keep me with him. I resolved to try to force my way through his fear, to set him at his ease, to get to know him better.

The man interested me. I had been with him only for a moment but I had felt force, intelligence, good breeding in him, and something mysterious surely had reached out as if sensitively, yet almost with terror—the terror of a great reserve—seeking my sympathy, even perhaps my pity. I knew that I couldn't leave the dweller in the bungalow in his solitude without making at least one quite definite attempt to break in on it. This attempt, I may say here, I never should have made if I hadn't felt certain Mrs. Marsh was right and that he was longing for speech with some fellow creature.

IT WAS SO. On the following morning I walked along the beach and passed the bungalow, going far beyond it. I had the feeling when passing it that I was seen, although I saw no one. When I returned the tide was nearly up and as I approached I saw Mr. Blow standing at the edge of the sea. He was throwing pebbles into the foam that eddied about his feet and seemed not to notice my coming. But I had the conviction that he had marked my outward walk and was waiting for me.

Nevertheless, he took no notice of me, and when I passed behind him he didn't turn his head to glance at me. Only when I was several yards away from him did he give in—to what? His overwhelming desire to have speech with someone, I felt sure. Then I heard his deep voice call, "Hello!"

I turned round. "Good morning—you want to speak to me?" I said.

He hesitated obviously, but at last he said: "Yes, if you've no objection."

And in this oddly abrupt manner my acquaintance with Derrick Blow—so he called himself at that time—began.

At first he was not at all at his ease with me. He had, I suppose, the natural shyness of a man long unaccustomed to intercourse with his kind. But there was something else, I felt, which made him self-conscious and watchful.

He made upon me the impression of a man who had suffered acutely, who even then was suffering from some tragedy of the past which had made him afraid of his fellow men.

There were moments when I fancied I detected a look as of guilt in his eyes when he forced them, as he sometimes did, to meet mine. But gradually, walking with me on the

desolate sands day after day, he evidently became accustomed to me and felt much more at his ease. He even opened out to me, but on topics of general interest, never on anything connected with his personal, intimate life.

I found him a man of force, obviously well educated and interested in big matters. He never talked frivolously or even lightly, though he had a sense of humor, rather sardonic. I often wondered what he had been in the past. I say what, because I gradually came to the conviction that he had been a worker, probably a great worker, and that he must have succeeded in what he had undertaken. The man could not have been just an ordinary failure. Often I saw him as one crashing—but from a height.

I had known him for ten days. Not a very long time, but it seemed to me that wild nature had drawn us together into a strange sort of intimacy. It was on the tenth day that he told me he had practised as a surgeon.

He let this fact out by accident. I had been speaking of some medical discovery connected with the action of drugs, and to my surprise he suddenly broke out into a diatribe on the vague humbug of medicine, contrasting it with the marvelous definiteness of modern surgery.

"Medicine is three parts bunkum," he said. "It's surgery that saves lives."

"Or destroys them!" I couldn't help adding.

The effect of my remark on him was startling. He abruptly stood still.

"Is that meant for me?" he said, with a sort of hushed intensity that struck right into me like a weapon.

"For you!" I said. "But are you a surgeon?"

"Ah—you didn't know it?" he said, in a quite different, almost faltering voice.

"Of course not. How could I? I know nothing whatever about you."

"No," he said hesitatingly. "How should you? Well"—again he hesitated, but finally as if with an effort concluded the sentence—"well, I have been a surgeon. I was even what is called famous—a famous surgeon."

And then he was silent.

"Shall we walk on?" I suggested.

"Would you—would you like to come to the bungalow?" he asked me.

I was surprised, for he never before had invited me into his dwelling, but I accepted his offer at once, and we turned from the sands, and went into the bungalow.

I was surprised to find how cozy, spacious and even charming it was. Made of iron, there was nothing to suggest iron in the interior. Fine rugs lay on the parquet floors. Good pictures hung on the walls, which were tinted in beautiful colors. Armchairs were covered with cretonnes in fine designs. There were quantities of books. One knew at once that this was the home of a great and omnivorous reader. As twilight was setting in Blow lighted a lamp, drew shutters, pulled forward curtains of mandarin-yellow.

"I'll tell my servant to bring us coffee," he said.

He went out of the room, but came back in a moment with a box of excellent cigars and made me take one. And he did all this with an odd air of almost excited eagerness. A middle-aged, very respectable-looking woman came in and set down a large silver tray holding a silver coffee-pot, a silver jug full of boiling milk and a large silver dish of buttered toast. She went out quickly, but not before she had directed to me a look of surprise.

"She's surprised!" Blow commented as the door shut behind her. "I never have people in."

"Why don't you?" I said. "It's very bad for you to be always alone. You're suffering acutely from loneliness. And the winters! How can you get through the winters here all by yourself?"

"How? Somehow! I've spent eleven winters up here." He helped me and himself.

"It's unnatural," I said.

"I came to live here because I was afraid of meeting people," he said. "I had a great catastrophe in my life. Have you ever had one in yours?"

"I've had troubles, anxieties, but never an actual catastrophe."

"Such a thing makes you afraid of your kind. I killed my own son."

The abruptness of this hideous revelation from a man who till that day, till that very hour, had been so absolutely reserved about his life and personal affairs, startled me, even turned me cold. I could not imagine why Blow had told me this dreadful thing.

HE MUST have read my thought, for he added after an instant spent in staring at me closely: "I've been wanting to tell you ever since I saw you by the fence that evening. I don't know why. But I felt as if you had been sent in order that I might tell you."

"Perhaps I was," I murmured. "There's a design—perhaps I was."

At that moment I felt certainly intense pity for my companion, but I also felt a quite definite shrinking from him.

"You're wrong," he said, in a low voice.

"Wrong! But—"

"You think it was deliberate murder, don't you?"

I suppose I had thought that. Perhaps I had. I wasn't sure. My mind felt confused.

"I told you I was a surgeon," he said. "Now can't you understand?"

"D'you mean that you operated on your own son and killed him by mistake?" I said. "But I thought—I had an idea that a man wasn't allowed to perform an operation on his own child, at any rate without an assistant. Possibly I'm wrong though about that."

He didn't tell me whether I was right or wrong. Instead, he remarked:

"Do you happen to remember the death of the only son, only child, of Lord Drenmere a good many years ago?"

"Drenmere, who was at the British Embassy in Paris as—"

"First Secretary."

"And who is now—"

"He's a minister now, and will be an ambassador."

"Why—but there was an awful fuss about his boy's death, wasn't there? The surgeon who performed the operation made a mistake, surely. It was Sir Mortimer Laton and—"

Suddenly I pulled up. I had realized who the man of the bungalow was.

"You're Laton!" I said, after a long pause.

"That's it. I'm Mortimer Laton. After that business I gave up practise and dropped out of life. I came and hid myself here. Very few people ever think of me now. But those who happen to probably suppose I've done the usual thing men who get into trouble do—go abroad."

"But you said you killed your own son!"

"I did. I was the father of the boy who was supposed to be Drenmere's."

"And didn't he know it?"

"Not till I killed the child."

I said nothing more, but sat back in my chair and looked at him. I was wondering why he was telling me this.

"An impulse!" he said. "An overpowering impulse—but one that has years of misery behind it. The man who instituted confession as part and parcel of a religion was a great psychologist. But unfortunately I don't belong to any form of religion. I'm out in the cold. If I weren't I don't suppose for a moment I ever should have bored you with my burden. Sorry—sorry—sorry!"

He wrinkled the high forehead under his soft brown hair—hair that had retained its color and that yet looked rather old—and got up in a violently restless way. I felt that he was dreadfully disappointed in me, that I had hurt his pride, had wounded the intense reserve which he had broken away from for a

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moment because, I suppose, of something in me.

"Laton, I wish you would tell me—if you can," I said hastily, eagerly. "I should like to share with you, if you can bring yourself to it. I was interested in you from the first moment I saw you that evening in the warren. I wanted to know you. I came back the next day with the hope of seeing you again. And then you called to me."

"Yes," he said, sitting down again. "I felt I must. It's deuced odd."

"We've gone so far, why not go all the way?"

My manner evidently had reassured him. He must have felt my sympathy reaching out, for he seemed suddenly more at his ease.

"Friendship's a great thing," he said. "But love's betrayed it over and over again, and will till the end of time. I was a great friend of Drenmere's, and a true friend till he married and I fell in love with his wife. But—then! I suppose occasionally you've read divorce cases in which a man's friend has seduced his wife—eh?"

"Yes," I said.

"And you've condemned the seducer as a blackguard? Exactly! Everyone does. But they don't reckon with love, which can be the most unscrupulous passion humanity holds, which will trample over corpses to get to its goal. However, I won't bother you with all the ramifications of my sentimental life, if you like to call it so. I'll state merely the fact that after Drenmere married Lady Sybil Caryllis, and had been married some time to her, I fell desperately in love with her. She was, in fact, the only love of my life. There never could be another.

"Drenmere was appointed to our legation in Persia not very long after the marriage. Her health at that time was not good. Barton Mills, the nerve specialist, said she simply mustn't go with him. She didn't go. She remained in London. Drenmere begged me to give an eye to her while they were separated. I said I would. When he came back we were lovers—but nothing had happened. You understand me?"

"Yes."

"It happened two days after he came back. His return had made us both desperate, and she wanted to prove to me that even when she saw him again I was the one. Madness and disgraceful, of course! But so it was. He had expected to go back to Persia, but because she couldn't go and because he could pull strings they sent him instead to the legation at Stockholm.

"My boy was born in Sweden. He was mine. There's no doubt about that. When he began to grow and develop you had only to look at him. She knew it too. But Drenmere hadn't the faintest suspicion. I knew, we both knew, that till the night of catastrophe not a doubt of his wife, not a doubt of his friend, ever had darkened his mind. As to the boy—I've never seen a father love a son as Drenmere loved my son."

"Whom he considered his," I said. "But if he had—"

"I think it's very dangerous to say what turn any man's heart will take in given circumstances," said Laton. "The body of man is mysterious enough. But what we call the heart of man is a thousand times more mysterious. I know that. It's been my profession to study the one and my fate to have the other revealed to me for an instant in a blinding light. The strangest thing of all is that I cut into the heart of the friend I betrayed with my surgeon's knife."

"How could that be?" I said.

"This way," said Laton. "I was separated from—her. I hadn't had a chance to see my son. I felt pretty desperate and because of that I worked like a devil. I got on tremendously fast in my profession. I may say now that I was clever at it. I do believe I had a gift with the knife such as few men of my time had. Money came to me. Honors came to me. But I was separated from the woman I loved and from my son. At that time, when money

and fame in my profession both came in full measure, I was a very miserable man and a very lonely one. I was punished. That one word really tells the whole story of that time.

"I didn't see my son till he was two years old. Then the Drenmers were over for a short time. In that short time I got to love the boy. But my love was poisoned by jealousy of Drenmere. I won't go into that. It's all natural but it's too ugly. Many ugly things are dreadfully natural. During that time when they were in England she—Sybil—and I didn't yield to our love again. But we were just the same. Only she was a mother now, passionately devoted to the boy, and—well, we didn't. That's all.

"They went back to Stockholm. Then Drenmere was transferred to Bucharest, and finally he was sent to the Paris embassy.

"From time to time they came to London and I saw them. From time to time I went over to Paris and was with them a little there. I was able to observe at close quarters Drenmere's intense love of my child. My own love I had to keep in the shadow—my love for mother and child. It was like looking in at a window and seeing your family in the grip of another man.

"When my fame as a surgeon was at its height and Marcus, the boy, the only child she had had, for Drenmere never gave her a child, was ten years old and on the eve of being sent to an English preparatory school, he became alarmingly ill in Paris and Drenmere sent me a desperate telegram asking me to go over at once. While I was answering it a telegram came from her, a telegram of one word—'Come.'

"I crossed by the night-boat and drove to their house in the Champs Élysées. Two French doctors were there, one of them a well-known and expert surgeon. The case had been diagnosed. The child was suffering from a deep-seated gastric ulcer. I realized at once that an immediate operation was necessary for fear of perforation. Drenmere begged me to perform it."

Laton stopped speaking for an instant. Then he said in a low voice, "I felt I couldn't."

Again he was silent. At last I said:

"You had lost your nerve? That was it?"
Then he looked up and nodded.

"All my frustrated love for the child seemed to break away from something, some barrier, and flood me then. I knew I wasn't master of myself. I knew it wasn't safe for me to operate. I refused. Drenmere insisted. He was in an awful state. He said he wouldn't trust a French surgeon, wouldn't trust anyone but me. I still refused. Then he attacked me, said I was a false friend if I wouldn't try to save his child, I who was performing operations on strangers every day of my life.

"She implored me, too. She must have lost her head then, for she couldn't understand that I was the last man who ought to have operated that night. I did my best to resist. I was overcome. They made me do it. Women can be cruel when the mother comes uppermost. She said a terrible thing to me that night just before I was going to operate. She was beside herself—but still—" He hesitated.

"What did she say?" I couldn't help asking.
"Save Markie or I shall hate you!"

"That was brutal."

"She didn't mean it. She was half mad. But I believe it was that sentence and the sound of her voice when she said it that really caused the tragedy which followed. I made a desperate effort to master myself. But I failed. Too much, for me, hung on that operation. I bungled. The knife slipped. I injured the child irreparably. Peritonitis set in. He died.

"There were people in the room, nurses, a French surgeon assisting me. They—they didn't miss my mistake. I wasn't able to hide it. I was so desperate that I didn't even try to hide it. As you know, it got out and my reputation was ruined. I lost both my son and my career during that brief stay in Paris. But I lost more than that. I lost my friend, and I lost the love of the woman I adored. It was very complete, the catastrophe!"

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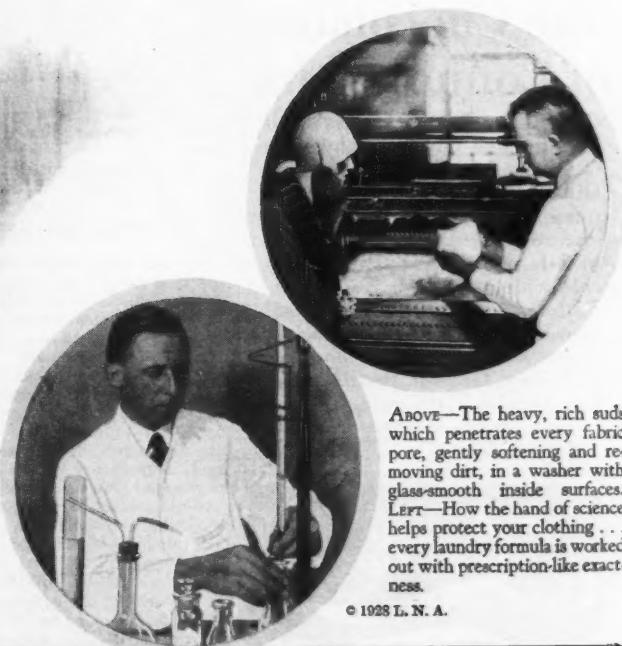
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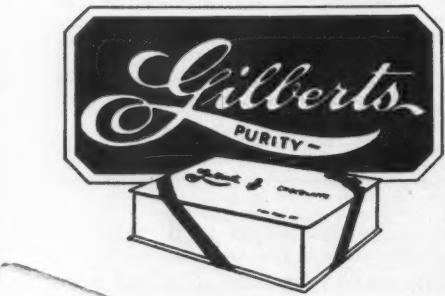
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"But d'you mean that she told Lord Drenmere?" I asked.

"No, I told him," he answered. "When the boy died Drenmere showed fineness of character. He wrung my hand and said, 'It's not your fault. You tried to save him. Anyone could make a mistake.' If he'd stopped there I might have controlled myself though I was almost entirely out of hand. But he added, 'Please God, you'll never have to face such a sorrow as mine.' Then I was lost. I don't make any apology. I did the unpardonable thing."

"I gave a woman away. I let go. Something broke in me—the thing that inhibits. I just told him, blurted it out, that I was facing a far worse sorrow than his." He looked at me with a sort of fierce steadiness. "Of course you condemn me," he said.

"No," I said. "But—I wish you hadn't."

"There are moments when a man has to be truthful. That was one of them. Truth was stronger than what we call honor, stronger than chivalry, stronger than sex. It had to come out. It came out and—I live here alone."

"How did Drenmere take it?"

"He said—when he'd had to realize the truth—"If Markie was yours in the flesh he was mine in every other way. He loved me and he never loved you. If he was alive now and knew, he'd still love me. He was mine in the only real way. The body can't choose always. But

The Complete Letter-Writer

(Continued from page 39)

someone: Fixing books in your own library—on Sunday afternoons. Always asked everywhere—together."

The short, detached sentences fell upon the air in an almost absent voice; she was groping in a desk drawer; she found what she wanted, and closed the drawer.

The cone of light fell on her hair, her features were somewhat in shadow; the long office loft was dark, with flashes of light caught in the line of black windows. Rain was falling outside, and twinkling on the dark glass.

"I may have done something very silly," Brenda admitted. "But I had the blues last night; I was up in Miss Smith's office and I had to wait for her for two hours. And it just came into my head . . . If you had got a letter like that before you were married, when you were—younger," she asked, "what would you have thought?"

"I don't know," Tom said, with distaste. He stood up, as a hint that the conversation was over.

But Brenda did not stir. "Would you have lost your respect for the girl?" she asked bravely.

"Not necessarily," Tom answered reluctantly.

He saw the conscious color flood her face.

"That's why I can't stay on here, then!" she cornered him triumphantly.

"My only idea would be that—that they might think you to be a very different sort of girl from the girl you are," Tom said.

"Well, since they don't like the sort of girl I am—" Brenda countered, shrugging.

"Oh, but that's nonsense!" he exclaimed, impatient and displeased. "Every man likes the decent sort, in his heart; wants his wife—and the mother of his children to be—fine."

She had defended herself gallantly enough, but he could see that the reprimanding tone he had taken had cut her to the quick, and he heard the trembling in her voice as she said:

"They don't act that way! Is—is saying that you would like to be married to a fine man any worse than—running around to night clubs, and smoking and drinking, and working your men friends for your actual clothes?"

"No, of course not," Tom answered quickly. "But—he felt his way—"but these girls are rowdies—common. And you—are not."

"I might as well be!" she muttered, still masking emotion with a show of defiance.

Tom meditated, frowning. "I wish you

nothing can prevent the spirit from having its way. I always shall think of Markie as mine." That's what he said. That's when his heart was revealed to me."

"I understand now what you meant about mysteries," I said.

"I lost Drenmere, of course, from that moment. I lost her. The boy had died under my knife, as it were. She couldn't bear me near her after that. And then—I had told. There was nothing for it but to disappear. The scandal was immense. But I might have faced even the irony of my own profession. What really sent me here? I sometimes ask myself."

"And what is the answer?" I said.

"Perhaps it is this—because I told, couldn't act a lie any more. So—we are!"

"Lady Drenmere's dead, isn't she?"

"Yes. She died three years ago. She was still with him. He didn't leave her. And she never tried to get away from him. They stuck together in the ruins."

"I quite understand your life now," I said.

And when I left him that evening I said: "I hope you'll allow me to call you my friend."

I don't think he was sorry to go.

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Brenda's cheeks were scarlet. "They'd think I was crazy! I've never even said 'two words to them, except about business'" she stammered. "Besides, they've already read them!"

"Not necessarily. In any case," Tom argued urgently, "it'll show them that the thing was an impulse—a sort of joke. Do that, now, like a—like a good girl! Call them up, and explain that you mailed the letters impulsively—go on, do that!"

"They'd say that the letter never arrived," she predicted darkly.

"Well, all the better!"

"Why, but that would only mean that they wanted to pretend it didn't arrive!" Brenda explained. "They'd think that was the easiest way—out of it, don't you see?" she went on, feeling for words.

"All the better," he said encouragingly again. "All you have to say then is, 'Please destroy the letter if it does arrive,' and the thing is over."

Her steady speculative look challenged him. "But I—I've really been thinking about that—about that problem, for years!" she protested.

"Nevertheless, it was a very silly thing to



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do," he felt it was time for him to say, firmly. "And then I'm meekly to come back tomorrow, and f-f-f-face them?" Brenda demanded, shuddering.

"You needn't necessarily come to this office. We could put you in Mrs. McCann's department. Just report to her there, and I'll speak to her about it. After all," he argued, "twenty-five dollars a week is—twenty-five dollars a week."

"Twenty-two and a half," she corrected. "Twenty-five," he persisted.

"And just live it down?" she asked, rising interest in her voice. And then suddenly she stood up. "I'll do it!" she said.

"But do, for pity's sake, telephone those men first and put yourself right!" Tom pleaded, with an anxious glance at the telephone.

"I will," she promised. "But I assure you every last one of them will tell me that the letter hasn't arrived."

He left her, her red lips close to the mouth-piece, the light streaming down upon the silken waves of her red hair.

Other girls were straggling back into the loft now, hanging wet coats and hats in obscure corners to dry, laying wet umbrellas wide open on the floor, and snapping up other cones of bright light above the line of the desks.

Most of them nodded to good-natured, fuzzy-headed Mr. Tom, who was adored by everyone in the place. Brenda Rutledge was murmuring at her telephone.

But for Tom the episode was closed when he went out through the flimsy glass-paneled door. A man in a dirty carpenter's apron was waiting to speak to him, and Tom bent his kindly gaze upon him and said to himself that he must shake his thoughts free for this new topic—and Stella's dinner-party. The Brenda episode was closed.

The next day he thought about Brenda. But not too much, not to the exclusion of everything else—exactly.

That morning, he decided, would be much too soon to hunt her up; better wait until afternoon. But in the afternoon he felt a little queer about it, and he kept putting off the little journey down the hall and into the temporary annex to Mrs. McCann's department. And presently the five o'clock whistle blew.

So that meant that he would have no report upon Brenda and the letters until the following day. The next day suited him, after all; it had become a sort of half-realized game with him, this testing his own power to resist the impulse to see Brenda.

But that night his father asked him to go to Washington, and once in Washington Tom found that he had to stay there three days, and then waste a fourth day in Philadelphia.

By this time he had given up trying not to think of Brenda, because it was so tiring to struggle against her all the time that the more economical thing seemed to be to give in. He thought about her steadily and comfortably; he sat in his chair in the chair-car coming home, his magazine unopened in his lap, his eyes upon flying snowy fields outside the window, and thought of Brenda.

After that when he went into the office to make his report it seemed suddenly flat to see her. She was walking through one of the offices at closing time with another girl, talking, and too much absorbed to see him. Just a slim, nice-looking, red-headed girl; he heard her say, "In your place, I wouldn't dream of it!"

Any girl could say that. Tom had a time of confusion, between the real girl and the dream girl, and it seemed to him that the latter was the more vital of the two. But when he went home to unpack his bag and talk to his mother, he kept thinking about Brenda again.

"In your place, I wouldn't dream of it!" She had a nice, fine voice too, she spoke like a lady. Well, of course she was a lady. Her father had been a fine fellow. Tom remembered him perfectly, even fancied he remembered his speaking proudly of his little girl.

He fluctuated for a few more days between a consuming desire to speak to her when he was

away from the office, and a sense of the flatness and futility in the proceeding when he was near. All day long he told himself that it would be the simplest thing in the world to see her and ask her, quite casually, how her little affair had turned out, and all day long he delayed taking the step. And the instant the offices were closed, and the girls gone, she began a feverish planning for a talk with her the next day.

He had no real business in Mrs. McCann's department. Tom told himself that he might have thought of that before.

However, about ten days after the little episode in the deserted loft on a rainy night, a real occasion for his visiting Mrs. McCann's department arose. That is, someone had to go, and Tom said he would step in and speak to her.

"Here, don't you go, Tom! Send someone," said Walter.

"Oh, no, I'll go!" Tom said quickly. And so he did, with a quickened beat at his heart and a little augmented color in the honest, simple face under the fuzzy hair. "She's out at luncheon, of course," he told himself.

However, she was not. She was standing at Mrs. McCann's desk, with her hands full of papers and her bright head bent, listening. Tom's presence she acknowledged only with a faint nod and a faint accentuation of color. He gave his message to Mrs. McCann.

His world was full of peace. He liked the office, bright in winter sunshine, with late girls in small hats and furred coats snatching things from desk drawers as they prepared to sally forth in search of luncheon and adventure, and chairs and aisles empty.

"Miss Rutledge—" Tom said. Mrs. McCann had done her snatching from her own desk drawer now and had rushed away. Brenda was obviously lingering. As she spoke to him, Tom wondered why there had been this tremendous tumult of anticipation in his own heart. Red-headed little Miss Rutledge, addressed by a member of the firm, who had known and respected her father. What could be simpler?

Her blue eyes were dancing, her cheeks roses. "I wanted to tell you—about the other night," she burst forth. "I've been having the—the most wonderful experience!"

"You got them in time?" Tom asked, unable to account for a strange sinking feeling deep inside him, but conscious of it nevertheless.

"Got—?"

"The four men—on the telephone?"

"Oh! Oh, yes. Every one of them. And the letters had arrived," Brenda said, with a shrewd narrowing of her eyes and a nod.

"They had!"

"I'm positive of it, although that night every last one of them denied it, and we haven't spoken of the matter since," Brenda went on significantly. "It's my conviction that they all arrived and were read and destroyed."

"And have you seen any of them since—the men, I mean? You've been all right in here—you've been out of their way?" Tom asked.

"Seen them! Ruter Thompson came to see me that night," she announced elatedly, "and Mr. de la Tour came in here at noon the next day and told me about his being engaged, and I'm going to dinner with Sidney Bentley and his sister and her boy friend!" She ended upon an innocent and triumphant laugh.

"You see, when I telephoned, I had to be rather—confidential," she explained. "And—with Mr. Bentley, anyway—I sort of—began to cry," Brenda went on, a trifle shame-faced. "I said to him—and to the others, too—that I'd been sort of lonely and that I'd written him a silly sort of letter—and that I wished he'd destroy it . . ."

"He was wonderfull!" she went on enthusiastically, after a pause. "His voice sounded so nice—so brotherly. He said that the letter hadn't come—I knew it had, but that didn't matter!—and that when it did he'd bring it to me, unopened, and he asked me—well, but that was the next day. He came in here and said that"—she colored, confused and laughing—"he came in here and said that he had always been sort of—well, afraid of me," she

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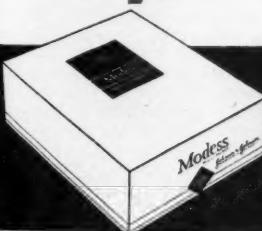
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confessed, "and that—oh, I don't know! He'd like me to meet his sister, and all that. So the letters," she ended, her shining eyes squarely meeting Tom's serious, somewhat troubled glance, "did do some good, after all!"

"Ha!" Tom said briefly, in inexplicable dissatisfaction.

"Keane Perry I don't care about—he didn't do anything at all!" Brenda ended the list cheerfully. "Mr. de la Tour's engaged. But Sidney Bentley and Rutger Thompson are darlings. Mr. Thompson wants me to learn bridge—imagine! His married brother and his wife are just beginning, and he says—"

They had strolled, as they talked, to her own desk in a corner, and now she laid her papers down upon it and jerked open a drawer and took out her purse and gloves.

"Isn't it fun?" she asked, eyes crinkled with laughter and every separate hair in her red head twinkling in sunshine.

"So you were wrong about men not wanting—good—fine wives," Tom said, a little awkwardly. "I told you they did!"

"Oh, not wives!" the girl exclaimed, reddening, laughing and confused afresh. "Just—friends. I wouldn't—I wouldn't marry either of these boys!" she assured him a trifle incoherently.

"You wouldn't?"

"Oh, no!"

"You can't," said Tom, clearing his throat, "be sure of that, now."

"Oh, yes, I can. You could tell, couldn't you?" Brenda reasoned. "You could tell the minute your eye fell on a girl that you didn't want to marry her, couldn't you?"

"Or that I did," Tom said, after a second's pause, fervently.

"Well, exactly!" Brenda exclaimed joyfully.

It seemed to be all over. Tom felt rather flat.

"But if—if you aren't seriously interested in either of these men," he began laboriously, "then what was accomplished by the letters—if they got them, after all?"

"Oh, they got them all right!" Brenda said darkly. "I know from the way they say they didn't get them that they got them!" she added lucidly.

"Yes, but wouldn't they suppose that you—that you had been attracted to them?" Tom persisted.

"I never said I was!" she answered quickly, her cheeks suddenly hot. "I just asked them why *they* weren't attracted to *me*. And I said," she added, with an air of frankness, "I said that I would like to be married, and I said that I'd like a home—"

"And children," Tom added firmly.

"And children," she agreed, her defiant blue eyes meeting his. "But—but," she went on eagerly incoherently, stammering as he had remembered her stammering in her distress and excitement a few nights before—"but I didn't say *his*!"

"He knew you meant his," Tom offered acutely.

"Oh, he didn't!" she said crossly. "If—if you now—said that you were fond of children!" she rushed on. "Suppose—just suppose you told someone—me, for instance—that you were fond of children—for instance—would that mean that you were in love with *me*?"

Tom blinked. "Well, yes, I think it would," he answered, gulping. He was conscious of a swifter heart-beat, of a sort of ecstatic terror.

"Children," he said in his soul. "What a miracle! That of the love of a man and woman a child should be the visible seal and proof!"

Her eyes softened. "Have you children?" she asked.

"Nope," said Tom briefly.

She hesitated, reverted to the original theme. "Even though I don't fall in love with either of them," she said briskly, "I have fun—learning bridge and going to movies. And I've proved to my own satisfaction that the reason the—the other girls have all the breaks is *not* because they jazz and drink and smoke, and all that, but because they're friendly," she added, thinking aloud. "If nice girls will be easy and

friendly and seem to be having a good time, that's all a man wants, isn't it?"

"The first time I went out with Rutger Thompson he told me so; he said he'd been wondering about me ever since I came into the office. But he said I was sort of stand-offish," Brenda explained, wide-eyed. "And he said that he was sitting in his boarding-house just wishing something would happen, that night I telephoned, and that it—he really did say this"—Brenda broke off, smiling and coloring deliciously—"he said he ran upstairs whistling and singing—

"I'm going to see him tonight, and I'm going to tell him all about that letter," she said. "I'm going to make sure he destroyed it. You may have thought it a crazy thing to do, but just the same it was the luckiest thing I ever did in my life!" she said.

Tom gulped again. "I have to tell you—" he stammered. He put his hand in his pocket and took out four letters, addressed in neat typing, stamped, sealed, unmailed.

Brenda looked at them with dilated eyes. She laid a hand on them, paling, panting, her breast rising and falling rapidly. Her astounded gaze moved to Tom's perturbed face. "Where'd you get them?" she whispered. Spreading them on the desk she saw the four names: Sidney Bentley, Jules de la Tour, Keane Perry, Rutger Thompson. "They're not opened," she said blankly.

"Just after we talked the other night," Tom explained, in deep embarrassment and agitation, "one of our carpenters here told me the postman had complained that the mail-clerk from that loft upstairs was out of order. The postman was waiting, and we three went up to see what the trouble was. There were only a dozen letters stuck in it. And these four were among them. So I simply—he gave a wretched, anxious laugh—"I simply robbed the mail!" he explained.

The girl's hand was still upon the letters, her eyes grew more puzzled. "They never were mailed! They never got them! But—but then why should they all suddenly be so nice to me?" she demanded.

"I suppose—maybe—because you telephoned them," Tom could only suggest. "You were kind of—excited, you know, and—you made quite an impression on me," he finished mildly.

She did not hear the last words; she was thinking. "But good gracious," she exclaimed, in healthy contempt, "is getting men as easy as that?"

"It's—it's very easy," Tom said.

"Well, it must be!" Brenda said roundly.

Tom made no comment, and she began to tear up the letters, envelopes and all, with her fine, strong young hands. He noted the delicate wrists, and when she spoke again, he raised his eyes to observe what a nicely molded firm young chin she had, and what—but he had noted that before and remembered it—what blue, blue eyes.

There was a slight pause. Then Tom, trembling a little, said: "Are you going to luncheon?" "Not until one. Mrs. McCann always leaves one girl for the telephone."

They were alone in the office; winter sun-shine was streaming in, and whistles, sounding half past twelve o'clock over the city, sounded gay and hopeful.

"Could you—take a letter?" Tom asked feebly.

She couldn't hide a look of faint surprise; he had his own stenographer, Mr. Tom. But she nodded capably, and again he noted her thin hand with its pencil, ready over the stenographic blank.

"It's sort of like those—" Tom began, nodding toward the torn scraps in her wastebasket. This meant nothing to her; she continued to regard him amiably, pencil suspended.

"And another thing I want to tell you," he said inconsequently. "I'm not married."

For a second this did not register. Then she widened her eyes, put down her book.

"You're—what?"

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"It's Walter," he admitted then, meekly. "You—you—" She was rendered speechless. "You mean that the lady who came in here that day after Christmas—Everyone called her Mrs. Travers," she stammered.

"Mrs. Walter. My sister-in-law. We all live together just now, while their house is being fixed. They have two little girls," Tom explained.

Brenda was staring at him, her cheeks scarlet. "Why, but I never—I never would have talked to you that way," she stammered, "if I had known—if I had dreamed! I heard everyone speaking of 'Mrs. Travers,' and you were looking for her that very night, and you said you'd be 'home' later."

She summarized it reproachfully, accusingly, and Tom nodded.

"I knew you thought so. But I didn't want to—put you off," Tom said delicately.

Brenda, her eyes absent, her face still red, was remembering. Her glance went toward the waste-basket.

"I'm all the sorrier to have let you know what a fool I am," she said briefly. And then, in a detached businesslike tone, "But you wanted to give me a letter?"

"It's very much like those letters you—took up," Tom began feebly, with another jerk of his head toward the waste-basket.

She glanced at their destroyed outlines superably. The shrug of her shoulder dismissed them. Again her pencil hovered expectantly over her book.

"It's to you," Tom said, in a rush.

Brenda looked at him politely. "Didn't you say that you wanted me to take a letter, Mr. Travers?"

"Yes, I did. But it's to you," Tom repeated, with a rather sickly laugh.

There was a short pause.

"I mean I thought you wanted me to take a letter," Brenda encouraged him patiently.

"Yes, that was it. A letter about wanting a home and children and—and—someone to love,

you know, and companionship and all that," Tom struggled on gallantly. "I wondered—you know—about going to dinner now and then, and maybe coming up for tea with my mother."

Silence again; they looked confusedly at each other.

Then Brenda said faintly, in a somewhat shaken voice, "Didn't you—want to give me a letter?"

"It was to you," Tom persisted.

"What was to me?" the girl asked, a strange April color fading and paling in her face, her eyes narrowed, her lip bitten.

"The letter," Tom said.

"Then—well, then, couldn't you just say it?" Brenda asked, in a tone that started at the normal and dwindled treacherously to a whisper.

"'Yep. I guess so,'" Tom answered, swallowing.

And again they looked steadily, almost apprehensively at each other.

"This is funny!" Brenda commented, with a nervous little flutter of laughter.

"Yes, it's funny," Tom agreed, laughing mirthlessly in his turn. "I—I never thought of it until the other night," he pursued, "and I've been thinking of it ever since."

Brenda wrote, "Miss Brenda Mary Rutledge, 800 West 92nd Street," on her writing-tablet, and looked up at him expectantly.

When Mrs. McCann returned to the office fifteen minutes later, the girl was still at her desk.

"Aren't you going to luncheon, dear?" asked Mrs. McCann.

"I have a date, at one," Brenda explained.

"Oh, that's all right then. You look awfully well today!" the older woman was moved to say suddenly. "What are you doing, eating yeast? I never saw you with such a color—and your eyes look real good, too."

"No, it's not yeast," said Brenda.

Tide of Empire (Continued from page 95)

enough to put their own wounded horses out of their misery and galloped away on the trail of D'Arcy and Francisco.

They retraced their steps a half-mile and came upon Francisco sitting his horse quietly under an oak tree. His white teeth illumined his swarthy face as he met them with a smile.

"The man who went down first lies where he fell. He moves, but I have not been near him. When the tail of the herd went by us Don Dermod and I rode to the opposite flank and pursued the two there. They emptied their pistols at us. There is a hole in my sombrero and another in my leg. I think, too, Don Dermod was hit, for I saw him sway in the saddle. But he did not pull up. He picked for himself the man on the roan horse.

"For myself, my pistol being empty, I continued to pursue the man allotted to me. Caramba! I roped that fine fellow and dragged him for half a mile. By that time he was dead and I came to the shade to rest.

"I regret I may not dismount in my present condition. It would be difficult to mount again. I bleed, but not too much. I will ride to the Rancho Arroyo Chico for aid. You would do well to follow on the trail of Don Dermod, my friends." He lifted his hat politely and rode away through the oaks.

McCready and Judson loped away in a general southerly direction. Presently they came to a stretch of grassy plain, with only an occasional oak, and at the distance of a mile they descried a saddled horse grazing; as they came closer they saw it was Pathfinder.

They were free of the stampeded herd now and could follow the trail of the pursuit through the luxuriant grass. And presently they came upon the body of D'Arcy, lying face down.

Judson rolled him over tenderly. "He's alive, but not very much, Mac," he decided.

"The man on the roan horse downed him, Jud. Well, you take care of him. I got other

business." McCready caught up Pathfinder and rejoiced to note that the horse was unhurt. Then he loaded his pistol and rifle, mounted Pathfinder and galloped away on the trail of the rustler, which showed plainly.

For an hour he followed it through open country without catching sight of his quarry. When the trail entered a district studded with oaks, McCready did not follow but rode around it, bearing toward the Sacramento.

"His horse'll need water," he decided, "an' the Sacramento is the nearest water. An' if he's smart he'll swim his horse across an' lose his trail. I'd do that. Let's see if he's done it."

Three hundred yards down the river bank from the point where he emerged he caught sight of his quarry. Instantly he drew back into the shelter of the oaks again. The rustler was resting his horse.

"He'll camp there tonight," McCready decided. "He has to. His horse is done in. He'll watch his trail, of course—he won't be expectin' me down the river bank."

He tied Pathfinder and pistol in hand proceeded to stalk his quarry. From oak to oak he glided with the stealth of an Indian. He was a half-hour negotiating that three hundred yards. By that time the rustler had cooled his horse and decided to let the thirsty animal drink. As he stood on a little sand-bar, with the halter-shank in hand, McCready stepped out into the open.

"Hands up," he commanded. "Stand right where you are an' do not turn around." He walked up and relieved his prisoner of his pistol. "Now then," he continued, "turn around an' let me have a look at you."

The man turned and McCready looked into a face terribly disfigured from a not very distant attack of smallpox. In McCready's agile brain a chord of memory twanged.

"You're Cannon, aren't you?" His prisoner nodded. "I might have known you'd come

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to a bad end. Well, saddle your horse," he commanded, "mount up an' let's get goin'."

"Where?" Cannon demanded.

"To a hangin', you skunk. Where d'ye s'pose? A grand ball?"

"I've done nothing. You haven't any evidence on me, mister," Cannon blustered.

"I think I have. Saddle up."

Cannon saddled up and leading his leg-weary roan walked up the bank to where Pathfinder was tied. McCready mounted the stallion.

"The next time you make a run for it see that you have a thoroughbred," he suggested. "These cold-blooded cayuses are good, but about the time they're quittin' a thoroughbred is just beginnin' to warm up. Mount up an' ride your back trail."

He looped his riata around Cannon's torso and made half hitch; the other end he tied to his pommel and followed behind the prisoner. About sunset he rejoined Judson, of whom his somber eyes asked a question.

"Francisco made it to the rancho," Judson answered the unspoken query. "He told Señorita Guerrero about our little ruckus, so she had a team hitched to an old family carriage, an' after she'd had Francisco's leg bandaged he led her on our trail. She's taken D'Arcy back to the *hacienda*. He'd got a rip along his ribs an' a bullet through his right lung. He was conscious when the girl took him away. Me, I wasn't any more use, so I waited here for you. I had an idea you'd git your man an' be back."

"I'd have been back sooner if I'd followed my natural inclination, which was to shoot this skunk the minute I sighted him. But I hadn't the heart to deprive you of a whole lot o' pleasure you got comin' to you, Jud. This here's Cannon, the great big chief thief of them all. I suppose there ain't no doubt about them cows belongin' to Señorita Guerrero?"

"Nary doubt. She tells me somebody's been rustlin' her cattle for months, so I reckon it's this feller. Let's string him up, Mac. There's another riata on your saddle."

He passed the loop around Cannon's throat and drew it taut. Then he climbed an adjacent oak, passed the loose end over a high stout limb, drew it down and fastened it to Judson's pommel. Cannon commenced to plead for mercy; he threw himself from the roan's back and groveled on his knees.

"I never knew a bluff an' a bully an' a sneakin' dirty dog that knew how to die well," McCready told him disgustedly. "You're a natural thief an' murderer an' there's too many o' your kind clutterin' up the state. We know your record."

Judson led his horse out from under the tree and Cannon rose, shrieking in horrible terror, to his feet; he ran along four or five steps, then his chin tilted and his cries became a momentary gurgle; his toes scuffed the grass tops; slowly, inexorably he rose until he dangled six feet from the ground.

"Man born o' woman," McCready murmured sententiously, "is mighty small potatoes an' few in a hill."

They rode away on the back trail. At the scene of the battle they found the man whose horse D'Arcy had shot from under him. He had a broken leg. So they took the riata from the saddle on his dead horse and hanged him with it, after which, feeling extremely virtuous, they rode to the *hacienda* of the Rancho Arroyo Chico for supper.

An Indian had told Mr. Poppy that it was going to be an open winter, and since he had always heard that Indians had infallible methods of weather prognostication unknown to white men, Mr. Poppy believed him. Nevertheless, even though no snow had fallen by the first of December, he became anxious. Such little practical common sense as he possessed warned him that he and the Bart should go down to Happy Camp before the snow flew; that delays were dangerous. But the Bart had gout and was unable to make the journey afoot, so Mr. Poppy, pinning his faith in the Indian's prophecy, decided to wait until

the fifteenth of December for Sir Humphrey to recover sufficiently to make the thirty-mile march.

On the fifteenth Mr. Poppy decided he could not afford further risk. He must go down to Happy Camp, secure a saddle-horse or a mule and return for Sir Humphrey. The Bart agreeing to that plan, Mr. Poppy cooked him four days' rations and fled down the trail to Happy Camp, where he arrived late that night, cold and hungry, and pounded on the door of the only domicile on earth he could call home.

But no response came to his summons; he did not know that D'Arcy and company had dissolved partnership and departed. He concluded they must all be uptown. So to the principal dance-hall and saloon Mr. Poppy wended his way.

As he entered the Bird Cage he presented an incongruous figure. He was dog-dirty and ragged, his hair hung down on his shoulders, his whiskers were long and unkempt, he was red-shirted, jack-booted and brown as the trunk of a madroño tree. Hence, the sirens of the Bird Cage knew instantly that here was one but this moment returned to the flesh-pots after a long absence in the wilderness; a man, forsooth, likely to have in his possession a poke well filled with dust and nuggets.

From across the huge room they called to him and waved enticingly, but resolutely he turned his back upon their spurious blandishments and headed for the long bar.

A hand slipped into the crook of his elbow, his progress was checked. "Hello, darling," a feminine voice cooed. "Welcome to Happy Camp. You certainly look like a man that needs a drink. Suppose we have a quart of champagne together and then a little dance?"

Mr. Poppy shook her off roughly. "You Jezebel," he growled.

"Now, that's no way to address a lady," the girl protested good-naturedly. "Suppose I buy you a drink of angelica and make you sweet!"

"A lady!" Mr. Poppy's tones were icy with contempt. "A lady!" He was so disgusted he turned to wither the unfortunate female with his most virtuous glance. He failed. Instead a great trembling seized him. When he could speak he croaked:

"Oh, Martha, Martha! You!"

"Obadiah! I—didn't think—I—Bejabers Harmon told me of your search—before that I thought you dead. I—I was going away soon—so I wouldn't meet you. Oh, my dear, my dear, I didn't want to hurt you!" She commenced to sob.

"Come away from this place," Mr. Poppy commanded and almost thrust her out the door into the frosty night.

"She ain't dressed for an open-air conference," a familiar voice warned him. Bejabers Harmon stood in the entrance. He removed his overcoat, and Martha slipped into it. "Our old cabin's deserted, Poppy," he explained. "Come over to my house. Madge'll turn the front room over to you and we'll leave you two alone to talk it all over quiet-like." He glared meaningly at Mr. Poppy. "A little Christian charity mebbe goes a long way tonight," he whispered, "and you got to remember you ain't no sweet-smellin' vilet yourself."

In the privacy of the Harmons' "front room," while Bejabers and Madge retired to the Mansion House parlor, Mr. Poppy and Martha faced each other. Then Mr. Poppy spoke.

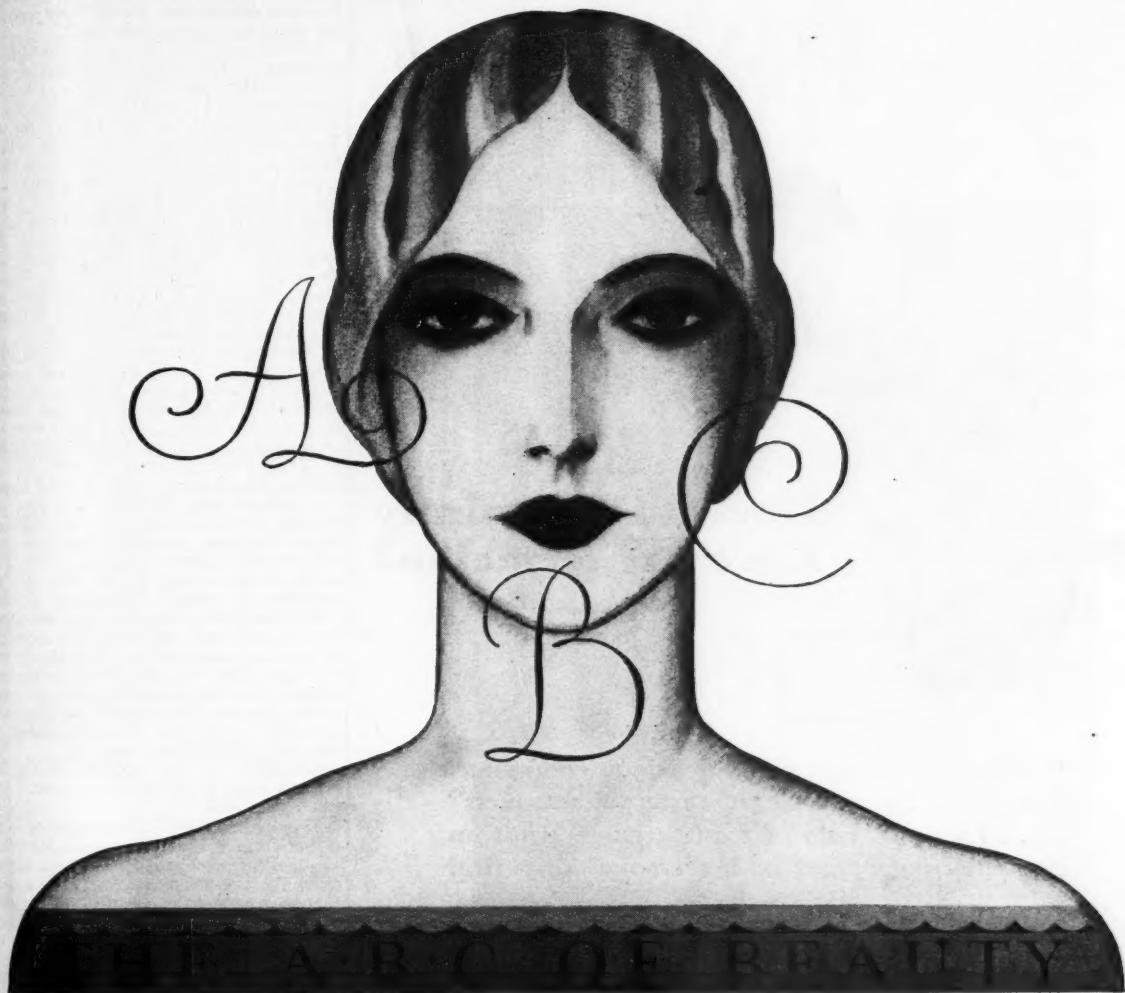
"I suppose there was nothing else for you to do, Martha?"

"I have no explanation, Obadiah. It—it happened."

"It's what I deserve, not you, Martha. I have a half-interest in a rich claim. I'm not worthy of you, but if you'll marry me I'll go straight—for both our sakes."

Martha's tones were tipped with contempt. "To make an honest woman of me? I am not low enough for that, my dear. There is no necessity for you to think you are called upon to sacrifice yourself. And I'll make no explanations, present no apologies. What I've done

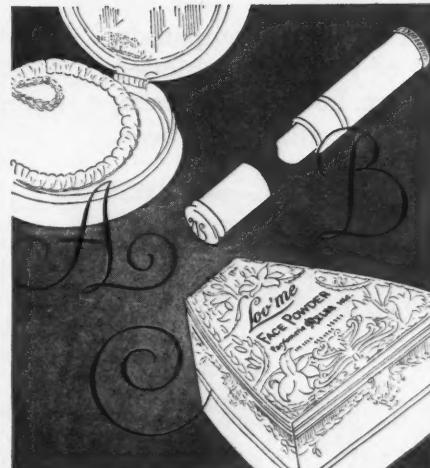
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your cheek
round, low



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CHEWING GUM

I've done deliberately. I could have protected my virtue by marriage long ago."

"I love you," Mr. Poppy replied with sad simplicity. "The finest, the loveliest impulse of my worthless life I owe to you. I'm a fool and a sham and a weakling; the only sincere thing in my heart has been my love for you. To the devil with your virtue! I used to think I knew all there was to be known about virtue — that is, Christian virtue, the product of a fear of hell-fire. I—I want to be a human being now. I want you because I love you."

"Once you had me up on a pedestal. The man of God! And all the time I was a child of the devil. . . . What did I know of humankind? What did I know of the trials and temptations of this world, when I thundered in a pulpit my denunciation of sin?"

"Martha, will you marry me—as an act of sweet charity? I need you so—and perhaps after all, you need me. If there's a human being who can help me upward and onward, it's you, dear heart. And I don't want any explanations. Can't we start all over again?"

"You're—not—ashamed of me?"

He shook his head. "The world I knew is very distant now, Martha. One gets very close to the sublimates of life in California. A new land with new aspirations, new ideals and a kindlier, broader outlook on life. That is one of the blessings of the gold. We will not discuss its curses. I'm waiting, Martha."

She crept into his arms, took his shaggy head in both hands and drew the long sad face down to her carmine lips. "Oh, sweetheart," she assured him, "it's been worth it all to know beyond a doubt that you're really the man I loved—that you really have in you the quality for which I loved you. Take me, Obadiah, oh, take me away, take me away."

He held her close, in silence. No, they had nothing more to say to each other. They could only feel.

They were married in the morning in the parlor of the Mansion House, with Madge and Bejabers for witnesses. The weather was still clear, the sky not overcast; beyond a doubt that Indian was an excellent weather prophet. Within an hour after their marriage the Poppys, mounted on horses supplied by Bejabers and leading another horse for the Bart, were bound up the trail for Hot Creek. And as they rode a leaden hue suffused the sky; presently a snow-flake fluttered against Mr. Poppy's cheek.

"We'll have to hurry," he said.

Softly, slowly the snow commenced to fall; by the time they reached the cabin it was whirling viciously. The Bart welcomed them and realizing that here, indeed, was an auspicious occasion, one which required due celebration, he begged Mr. Poppy to brew a pot of "the craythure."

Mr. Poppy obeyed, but it was an empty glass he hoisted in response to Sir Humphrey's ornate toast to the long life, happiness and prosperity of his partners, for with that large prodigality of his he had instantly included Martha in the partnership. When Sir Humphrey was comfortably intoxicated Mr. Poppy put him to bed and returning to the fire sat beside it with Martha and planned with her for their future.

When he ventured out in the morning he found the cabin half buried in snow-drifts, with the snow falling so thickly that it was with extreme difficulty he found his way to the little grove of pines in which he had tethered the horses the night previous. This grove constituted the only possible shelter, and although Mr. Poppy had tied the saddle-blankets on them the horses were almost frozen. He would have lighted a couple of bonfires to warm them, but he could not find any dry wood; the best he could do was to melt snow and water them—a tedious process.

He had three feeds of grain with him and this he divided into six feeds and gave one to the famished beasts. He returned to the frail cabin half frozen, but when Martha suggested that he take a drink of whisky to revive himself he shook his head. "I'm done with that," he told her.

It snowed for a week without cessation. The

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tiniest vestige of the trail to Happy Camp was obliterated, and on the third day the horses perished. The snow was twenty feet deep and completely covered the cabin, and when a lack of fuel made a sortie necessary Mr. Poppy had to dig a tunnel to the surface. Laboriously he shoveled the snow off the carcasses of the horses and disemboweled them; then he shoveled the snow back on them and packed it down with his feet, for it had occurred to him that he and Martha and the Bart were snowed in for the winter and that fresh horse-meat might avert starvation when their other rations should be gone.

It occurred to him, too, that Bejabers would lead a rescue party to them on snowshoes, so he shoveled the snow off the cabin roof in order that they might see it. But that same night it commenced snowing again, nor did it cease for another week. When it did, Mr. Poppy made a sortie to the grove, cut a large patch of hide and a piece of meat from one of the martyred horses and returned to the cabin.

Here, with yew wood and strips of green horse-hide, he fashioned snowshoes for Martha and himself; then, with infinite labor he made a sleigh, with runners of hard Valparaiso live-oak, padded it with a mattress rudely fashioned of pine-needles laboriously dug from under the snow about the roots of the towering pines, and made a harness for himself from one of the latigos on the saddles and the bridle-reins. Then he fried sufficient horse-meat to last three days and announced his plan.

"We've got to get out," he declared. "We must take a gambler's chance. I have given up hope of a rescue party. My plan is to put Sir Humphrey on this sleigh, wrap him in blankets and start down Hot Creek canyon to the Arroyo Chico. Hot Creek will be frozen over, and there will be several feet of hard snow over the ice."

"That route isn't passable in summer but I'll have to chance it is passable in winter. If we can get down to the Arroyo Chico we'll be safe. The junction of Hot Creek with the Arroyo Chico is only ten miles above Happy Camp; I can walk that far and get help."

Sir Humphrey spoke up with delightful cheerfulness. "My dear Poppy, you're a loving and loyal ass. Of what manner of use am I in the scheme of life? Leave me here to Providence and go on without me. I'll only hinder your chances of escape."

"You're my partner," Mr. Poppy replied doggedly. "You'd never desert me. What's your idea of the situation, Martha?"

"We'll stick by our partner," the girl replied.

At daylight next morning they started. As Mr. Poppy had suspected, thirty feet of snow covered the frozen rapids, pot-holes, boulders, and waterfalls in the creek bed and the weather had turned warm, for which they were grateful.

At midday they halted for a meal of tea and cold fried horse-meat. Martha was just filling the Bart's pipe for him when from far up the canyon a thunderous roar came to them.

"What the devil's that?" the Bart cried.

"A windfall," Mr. Poppy answered. "Trees, top-heavy with snow, crashing to earth through other trees."

"Too many trees falling, I'm thinking," the Bart replied complacently. "Are ye quite certain it isn't an avalanche?"

Fur up Hot Creek canyon Mr. Poppy could see a cloud that looked like spray thrown up when giant waves hurl themselves upon a rocky coast.

Martha crept into his arms. "What is it, Obadiah?" she whispered. "It frightens me." "Hush," he warned her. "Don't let Sir Humphrey hear you. Thank heaven, he's blind and cannot see it. It's an avalanche, sweetheart. This hot spell has thawed it—or perhaps a landslide started it." He drew her to his heart. "It's coming down the canyon—a wall of it a hundred feet high."

"Are we going to die, Obadiah?"

He nodded. "We cannot escape."

"I'm not afraid," the girl whispered—"not with you."

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"NOW YOU'LL LIKE BRAN"

"Poppy, me dear boy," the Bart boomed, "it occurs to me we're in the devil's own fix. It's an avalanche and it travels fast. I'm thinking it's coming down the canyon."

"It is," Mr. Poppy quavered.

"Indeed! What a misfortune to be deprived of the sight of such a magnificent spectacle. Are we in for it, lad?"

"We will be dead in sixty seconds."

"I'm sorry for ye and Martha. Yer hand, partner. Ye've been faithful and true and I was never aught but a vagabond and not worth saving. God have mercy on us. Well, I came for adventure and I've had it and I'm not repinin'."

Mr. Poppy wrung his partner's hand and Martha bent and kissed the scarred red cheek before seeking again the comforting haven of her husband's arms.

"Ah, love," she whispered and closed her eyes, waiting.

IN THAT supreme moment Mr. Poppy, strangely enough, did not pray. He did not even think of God or his soul or Hell or Heaven; rather he was sensible of a subtle peace.

He glanced down at the Bart, calmly puffing his pipe. Whatever Sir Humphrey was, whatever he had been, he had always had in full measure that quality of virtue which Plato exalted—the virtue of intelligence and courage. His calm fascinated Mr. Poppy.

"It's the end of the trail, Sir Humphrey!" he shouted above the roar of the avalanche.

"God is good and the devil not half bad—when ye're acquainted with him," Sir Humphrey replied blithely—and winked a sightless eye.

Mr. Poppy looked up the canyon from which there was no escape because of its precipitous walls. A great flurry of fine snow rose a hundred yards in the still air—a wall of solid snow, rolling, billowing, tumbling down upon him, bearing a fringe of boulders, timber and earth before it, was fifty yards distant.

He shook his head and looked down into the sweet, pale, but untroubled face of his Mary Magdalene—he bent and kissed the closed eyes—and waited in a sort of holy ecstasy, holding her close to him, unafraid, defiant, unrepentant, a free soul at last—a man!

Spring again—spring of '51. In the lush lands of the Rancho Arroyo Chico the last few cows left to Josepha Guerrero nursed their new-born calves. The land was golden again with buttercups and eschscholtzia. But it was no longer a lonely land or riotous with the clamor of the adventurers; it would never be lonely again.

At least Dermod D'Arcy thought so as he marked the grain fields planted by the squatters and noted the rude fences they had erected around the farms they had preempted. For four months he had lain in a rude hospital at Sacramento, recovering from the wounds received in his foray with the cattle thieves, but now, restored to his old vigor and mounted on Pathfinder, he was returning to the Rancho Arroyo Chico. And he rode alone.

When D'Arcy arrived at the *hacienda* Don José's mongrel hounds bayed furiously at him. He swung down from Pathfinder, as Patricio, opening the front door, glared out at him.

"Ah, Don Dermod D'Arcy," he murmured.

"You didn't expect to see me here again, did you?" D'Arcy greeted him with malevolent cheerfulness. "Well, I'm back again, like a bad penny. Is your mistress at home?"

Patricio nodded and emerged to take charge of the guest's horse, for however unwelcome this gringo might be to him, the laws of hospitality were ever sacred. D'Arcy strode into the house.

"Josepha!" he called.

She came to him from the lean-to kitchen.

"You have been long coming, Don Dermod," she chided and proffered him both little hands. "I had thought you had forgotten. Since that evil day when the terrible ones bore you away to Sacramento I have had daily news of you; I thought you might come a week ago."

He beamed down at her. "Indeed! And who bore you tidings of me?"

"Each day a *vaquero* has left the rancho to glean news of your condition at the hospital; each day a *vaquero* has returned with it. You have been very close to death, Don Dermod." He nodded and led her to a seat. "And I have been desolated," Josepha continued, "with the thought that you were to die in my service."

"I couldn't afford to die. You needed me. Moreover, we gringos do not die too readily."

"You are very welcome, Don Dermod, if for a little while. Whither are you bound now?"

"Sweetheart," he replied, "here is the end of my journeying. A long time ago did I not tell you that I would come back when my work was finished? I could not come before," he added as an afterthought. "Once I was a penniless wanderer—"

"Ah, yes, you were ever pride'ul, Don Dermod. Why have you not returned sooner?"

"I have been in San Francisco, dear one. I read in the paper that you had filed with the Federal Commission on Land Titles your claims to the Rancho Arroyo Chico—so I have been looking into the matter and speeding a decision. It has been duly investigated and a decision was handed down five days ago."

"I have not been advised, Don Dermod."

"Well, I am advising you now. Your claim has been rejected, Josepha. There is no record in the old archives to substantiate it. Of course you can appeal to the courts, but I fear that will be of no avail. I think the commissioners have rendered an honest decision. They had no alternative. Personally, I am delighted to know you are no longer the mistress of the Rancho Arroyo Chico."

"Why do you say that?" she demanded.

"That decision gives me the right to demand that hereafter all of your worries shall be mine. Josepha, I love you. Surely you must know that. I've loved you since that day I rode away from you at San Juan Bautista. I have labored for you. All my life I must adore you—ah, sweetheart, will you marry me now?"

"You are sure you love me—for myself?"

"More than ever—now that you are helpless and alone in the world."

"I believe you," she answered slowly, "and believing, I will not reject the labor of your love. Ah, thou gringo, thou dominant one! Always have I loved thee—and oh, how that love has hurt because of the sad obstacles to our loving."

He put his strong arms around her and drew her to him. "*Pobrecita!*" he murmured, "rest always on this heart. I never wanted you with a dowry, for it is the way of the gringo to provide his own."

"Ah," she murmured happily when free at last of his caresses, "but you *shall* have a dowry—the Rancho Arroyo Chico. Dear one, you do not marry a fool, but you do marry a woman who has much curiosity. Always I loved you, yet I was resolved not to marry you. The reasons? Well, you know them. Once they seemed very good reasons.

"I knew that some day you would come to me; I feared if you did not I would come to you. But deep in my heart I had a great desire to know that you loved me because I am your Josepha and not for the lands my father left me. For it has seemed to me, my lover, that the gringo is too eager for land."

"So when I presented my claim to the commission I attached only the original grant. I knew the claim would be rejected, because I knew that in the archives at Monterey there was no record to substantiate it." She laughed merrily at her gigantic jest and went to an ancient iron treasure-chest from which she removed a bundle of documents and handed them to him. "Read," she commanded.

He obeyed. "There must have been somebody with brains and forethought on this rancho once," he told her presently. "The Rancho Arroyo Chico has been surveyed, its boundaries carefully designated and the boundaries set forth meticulously in the deed of grant. This obviates the possibility of a

claim which is arising in numerous instances with others—to wit, that the grant is not legally or specifically delimited and lies within unlimited outside domain."

"My mother was an Englishwoman, Don Dermod. She it was who refused to be casual. She had vision. She felt that one day the order of things might change, that unless the boundaries of the grant were specifically outlined there would be an opportunity for covetous ones to advance claims to that land contrary to ours. So she induced my father to make definite surveys, to erect monuments and to run the boundary lines between natural landmarks."

"Yours is a Mexican grant. It bears the seal and signature of the secretary for state at Mexico City, as well as the signature and seal of the California *gobernador* who approved the grant and issued the patent."

"That, too, was my mother's desire. Ah, those lazy, careless ones at Monterey! They thought so much of pleasure they paid but scant attention to keeping the archives of the government in orderly fashion. This my mother noticed. Often have I heard her relate the story of her visit to Monterey to make certain that the record of the grant to my father was duly entered in the big book there. She even saw to it that my father's application for the grant and the record of its consideration and favorable action by the *gobernador* were duly recorded in the big book and a notation made on the daily record of the *gobernador's* procedure."

"But here are the records essential to proving the legality of your grant," he protested in amazement. "Why are they in your possession rather than in the official archives?"

"Ah, you do not know those politicians at Monterey. Always there was strife between them. A new *gobernador* would come from Mexico and demand the archives. The retiring *gobernador* would refuse to recognize the authority of the new arrival, and when eventually he was forced to, the new *gobernador* might retain the seat of government at Monterey, or he might remove the seat of government, taking the archives with him. There was much jolting of those archives up and down the coast in *carretas*.

"My mother said: 'Those villains will lose the record of our holdings.' So when at last it seemed this foolish quarreling was over and the seat of government firmly established at Monterey, my father and mother rode there to make certain that the record of the grant of the Rancho Arroyo Chico was intact."

"My mother—ah, she looked into the future. She trusted no man in California—not even my father. At dying she warned me against him. 'Josephita, your father is a lovable old fool. Watch over him.'"

"Your mother was a remarkable woman. Was she not also a remarkable thief?"

Josepha laughed. "Ah, yes. She thought those records would be safer in my father's strong box, so while my father talked with the secretary of the *gobernador* she removed them. See, these pages have been torn from the binding. They are numbered; they are in the handwriting of the secretary to the *gobernador*; there will be no trouble to prove my claim after I appeal it."

"This is indeed extraordinary, Josepha."

FOLOWED a little silence while the girl's fingers crept through his wavy raven hair. "And so, dear heart," she murmured presently, "you will be a California *ranchero*, no?" In the fulness of time you will eject these Americans who plow our pastures and cut down our trees. I do not like them. They have not manners."

"No, they have not, but they'll make a state out of California. Yes, I'll eject them when the time comes and I'll be a *ranchero* and revive all the ancient glory of both our clans."

"And tomorrow, thou great bully?"

"Tomorrow we ride to Sacramento to be married and live happily ever afterward."

THE END

Circe

(Continued from page 69)

down, and studied the reverse. "Time is a slippery thing. You wouldn't think me forty-five, now, would you?"

"I would not. At least sixty."

He sighed. "It's grief," he said.

She put the embroidery away and yawned. "You saw where I keep the garbage. The first thing in the morning, feed the pigs." Very gracefully she moved toward the hallway.

"Where shall I sleep?" said Odysseus.

"I don't care—please yourself."

"Before we retire, hadn't I better lock up?"

He tried the front door.

"There's no key in it—there's not another soul on the island."

She disappeared into her room. One of the dogs took up a strategic position across the sill, the other stretched himself before the hero's armchair and blinked up at him. Odysseus wished there had been a sofa or a couch, but after all, an armchair is something. He meditated on Circe and her hospitality, shifted his aching muscles, and analyzed his emotion. Was she enchanting, or only seductive? Was he already under her famous spell, or was he sleepy?

Several months later he was still asking these questions. He began his days waiting upon the pigs; he ended them in pleasant but not spirited conversation with Circe, as she bent over her embroidery. His one sign of progress was the cot he now slept on, instead of the armchair, but it wasn't of her providing—he found it himself, ransacking the attic.

His evening talks with the pantherlike lady were not, you might say, romantic; she answered when spoken to, if her attention wasn't too much on her work; she never uttered a syllable to imply satisfaction that he was there. Yet he hung on from day to day, convinced that here was the real thing in the way of adventure, if only he could get by her fascinating reticence. The rudeness of her manners he translated into a bewitching honesty of mind, and he suspected she was in love with him herself, but reluctant to admit it.

One night when he had washed and wiped the dishes, and settled in his chair across the room from her, he had the impulse to bring his visit to some sort of conclusion. At the moment she seemed unusually handsome, and he regretted the distance between them, the tentative note in their companionship.

"As I've been going about my work," he said, "I've meditated recently on the social conventions between men and women."

"Assuming that there are any," said Circe, "what's the matter with them?"

She still worked on the embroidery, but this time she showed a spark of interest.

"They are false—too complicated, too cumbersome for the direct communication of soul with soul."

"You find it so?" She actually put down the embroidery and looked at him.

"A woman is brought up nowadays to think her chief business is to capture every man she meets, and the men think they've got to make love to all the women." He crossed his legs comfortably. "It's a great nuisance."

Circe resumed her work. "It must be," she said. "I'm glad I wasn't well brought up. I never try to capture anybody—not even the attractive ones."

He thought this over.

"My idea is that if men and women weren't accustomed to this bad tradition, they'd just be friends—that is, the sympathetic ones. Then you'd have a world of—well, it would be a much better world."

She paused again, and turned toward him. "They'd just be friends, would they? How would they go about it?"

"Why, they'd just be friends—nothing to go about."

She shook her head. "I never saw it happen, and I can't imagine how it's done. Have you



"—we like the Wint-O-Green best, Mister."

His First "Treat"

It was the first time he ever bought candy for "her." How proud he was as he stepped up to the counter and asked for "a package of Life Savers—Wint-O-Green, please!"

"That's the flavor we like best," he said, as he eagerly broke the little tin foil and presented his first "candy" to her.

* * *

It is perfectly natural for youngsters to crave sweets. Every growing child demands sugar. Active little bodies must be fed some "sweets," but they must not overeat.

Life Savers, the little candy mints with the hole (life saver shape), are ideal for them. They are china-hard and deliciously flavored. This means that children eat them slowly, and the delicious refreshing flavors last longer. Little tummies are not upset. Life Savers are kind to tiny teeth.

Six popular flavors: Pep-O-Mint, Wint-O-Green, Cinn-O-Mon, Lic-O-Rice, Cl-O-Ve, Vi-O-Let. Five cents a package everywhere.

Good for
little tummies

P. S.
Lots of folks are
enjoying LIFE
SAVER FRUIT
DROPS, Orange,
Lemon, Anise,
Lime and Grape.
Have you tried
them?



Daily Massaging with Forhan's keeps gums healthy and teeth alive

MAKE THIS

MINUTE TEST



STAND before your mirror. With your forefinger press against the lower gum. Increase the pressure gradually. Then quickly lift your finger. Its shape is outlined in white on the gum. Gradually the blood returns and the gum feels invigorated.

That is what happens when gums are massaged with Forhan's night and morning. The gums are kept youthful, healthy. And as a result, teeth remain alive and sound, provided they are submitted to dental inspection at regular intervals.

Why Gums Must Be Exercised

Neglected gums pull away from the teeth. They soften and soon become a favorite breeding ground for such insidious troubles as Pyorrhea, Gingivitis, and Trench Mouth—enemies of good health. As your dentist will tell you, to keep gums firm and free from infection, you must brush and massage them.

First thing in the morning and the last thing at night, massage your gums with Forhan's for the Gums. Just apply Forhan's to the index finger and thumb. Rub upper and lower gums both inside and out, rub the roof of the mouth until

you feel the exhilarating glow that comes with increased circulation. Directions are in booklet that comes with each tube.

Don't Be Among The Unlucky 4 out of 5

Protect health against the grim foe that strikes 4 out of 5 after forty and thousands younger, dread Pyorrhea. Use Forhan's as a massage, as a dentifrice.

It cleans teeth and restores their natural whiteness. It protects them against acids which cause decay.

And in addition, it helps to firm gums and keep them youthful and sound. This dentifrice, the formula of R. J. Forhan, D.D.S., is compounded with Forhan's Astringent used by dentists in the treatment of Pyorrhea.

Don't wait for warning signs, for gums to bleed and recede from teeth, for teeth to loosen in their sockets. Begin using Forhan's for the Gums, today. At all druggists, 35c and 60c.

Formula of
R. J. Forhan, D. D. S.

Forhan Company, New York



Forhan's for the gums

YOUR TEETH ARE ONLY AS HEALTHY AS YOUR GUMS

ever been this simple kind of friend with anybody yourself?"

"Frequently, frequently," said the hero. "In friendship you talk—exchange ideas—have the same enthusiasms—share your troubles—perhaps you pass the time in each other's company without a word, basking, if I may use the term, in mutual harmony of spirit."

"I'll begin at that end," she said. "I like silent basking." She thrust her needle through the cloth, and turned her back on him.

"When I referred to the higher life," said Odysseus, "I wasn't limiting myself to the mystic aspects. Harmony of spirit does not necessarily preclude conversation."

One of the dogs got up and stretched. Odysseus rose too, and walked up and down the room.

"If you took more exercise in the daytime," said Circe, "you wouldn't have the fidgets now."

He sat down again, and meditatively rubbed one leg. "My foot was asleep."

"Which foot?"

"The right."

"Then why are you rubbing the left leg?"

He began to rub the other. "At times," he said, "I think you really try not to be sympathetic. That's why friendship is so rare—women won't make the effort to understand—not the ordinary ones, anyway."

She turned so swiftly, he half expected her to spring at him across the room.

"Don't I understand? You think you're a mystery, do you? Well, every one that's been here was the same. First, a sheeplike admiration, then a rather nasty style of love-making—call it friendship or what you will, it comes to the same end—then a fine flare of passion, and then one more lazy, conceited animal loafing around the house. I never met a husband who got any further. You all want food, and then you want me, and then you put your feet up on a chair or a couch and think it over for the rest of your days!"

"An ignoble love," said Odysseus, "will transform the best of men into an animal."

"That's far from my experience," said Circe. "A really noble love might fit a man to associate with a fine dog. I've never seen it happen, but I suppose it would."

"My experience," said Odysseus, "is probably wider than yours. When I was at—"

"Why don't you go home to your wife?" said Circe. "The first night you were here you babbled about her, but recently I haven't heard her name. Doesn't she want you back?"

"My wife is a remarkable woman, and there are times when the yearning to see her again drives me to—"

"I can just imagine the sort you are when you're home. I get your wife's point of view without the least effort. Every day I keep you here, supplying you with food and mild distraction, I think how grateful she'll be."

"What sort did you say I was, when at home?"

"The good-for-nothing kind. You persuaded the poor woman you were going to be somebody. That was while you both were very young. She thought you would be a great lover. Then she thought you'd be at least a great man in public. Then she hoped you'd help with the housework. Then she got used to seeing you sit around, and she wouldn't even sigh when she had to ask you to lift up your feet so she could dust around your armchair. That's the way you've grown old."

Odysseus stood up. "I'm not old, and you've guessed all wrong. My gray hair is the result of sorrow and heavy thought at Troy."

"Oh, that's where you did your heavy thinking," she said. "I knew it wasn't at home. Were there any women at Troy?"

"Several. The one I told you of, in particular."

"Poor thing! All that riffraff following her around!"

"You don't know the men you're talking about! You never in your life saw that kind. Yes, I'm old now, but when we first went there—as a matter of fact, I wasn't much in

comparison with the others, but we didn't take insults, not even from women. Mind your tongue!"

She smiled bewitchingly at him, as if their repartee was of the happiest.

"Not insults, but you don't mind taking bread from women, do you? No, I didn't see your friends, but if you're a sample I can guess. You never did any real fighting—you just talked."

"My gift is for oratory," said Odysseus, "but I can fight on occasion. While Achilles was sulking—"

"One of those friends of yours, I suppose—sulking."

He looked at her with sudden danger in his eyes.

"He's dead now—be careful what you say!"

She looked back at him, twice as dangerous. In fact, she strode over and spoke the words in his teeth. "He was a cheap adventurer like you, a vagabond and a coward!"

She was close to him, and it did seem as if she might unclinch her fists and scratch. That was his best excuse. Anyway, he slapped her face. Under his heavy hand she dropped to the floor. He thought of her dogs, a little late, and glanced about for a hasty weapon. But the animals were still in their places, blinking placid eyes. For them, apparently, this scene was not novel.

Odysseus looked at the woman again, his knees wobbling. There was a bad spot on her cheek. She ought to put oil on it before it turned blue. He'd advise her as soon as she recovered consciousness. Her legs were bent under her, most uncomfortably, and her body, twisted in the fall, showed gorgeous through delicate cloth. Perhaps he had better lift her to the couch, let her rest easy. He leaned down and got his arms part way around her shoulders. There was a good deal of her—he staggered. But all beautiful. Delicious thing!

The delicious thing was roused by the pulling and hauling. She opened two dazed but lovely eyes and stared into vacancy. Gradually she recalled time and place, and at last recognized the beard and the blanched skin staring down at her. Her lips took on her most enchanting smile.

"Dear lover!"

"You'd better be careful how you talk," said Odysseus. "In general I don't like to hit a woman, but the memory of my friends is sacred. Achilles was a splendid gentleman."

"Of course he was! I don't know a thing about him, anyway. Dearest!"

"Your attitude has been faulty from the moment I entered this house. It isn't for me to boast of my career, but the first principle of hospitality is to treat the unknown stranger as though you suspected he might be somebody. A god in disguise, perhaps. Such things have occurred."

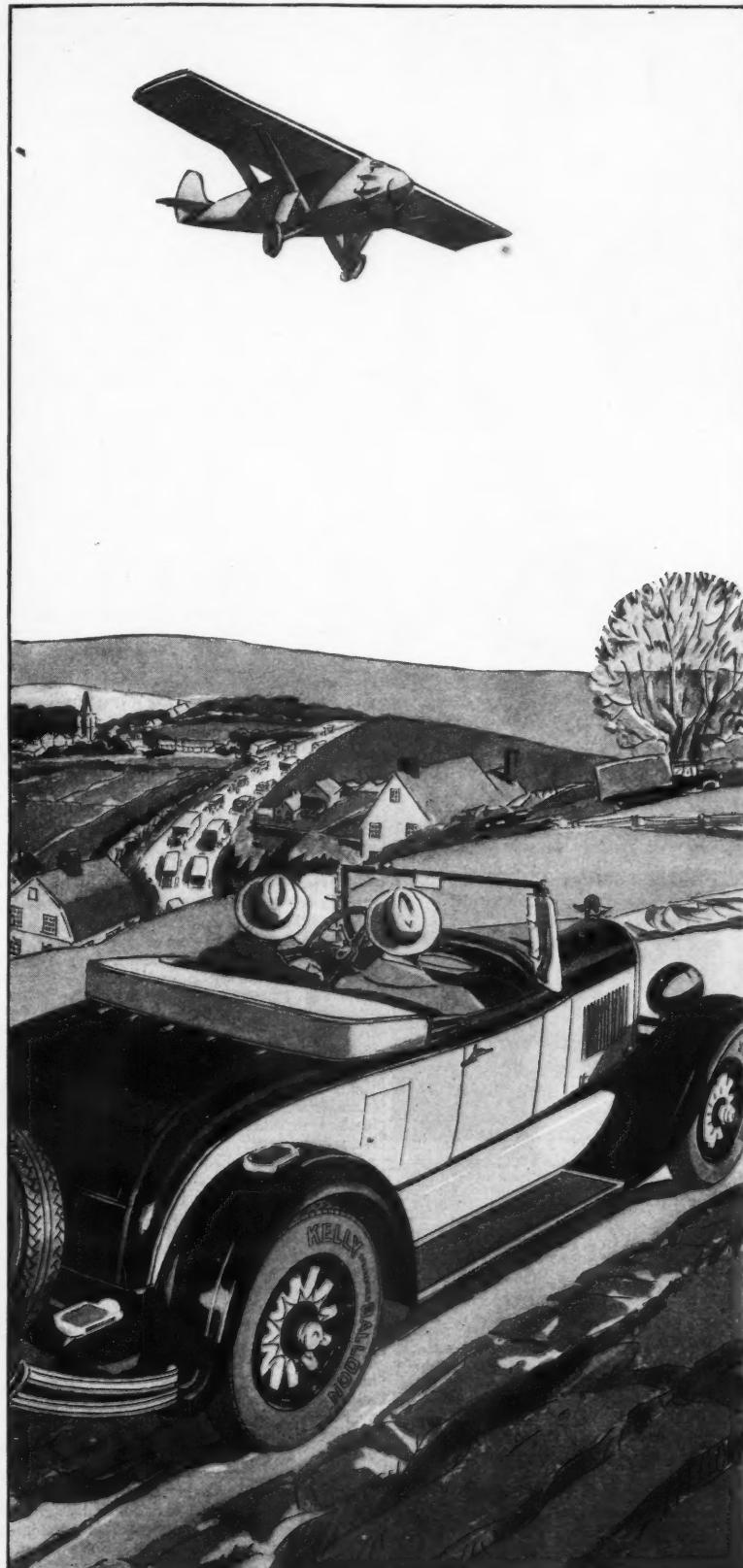
"It has occurred to me." She smiled more broadly.

"You can't imagine what it is to be the victim of fate, to wander from coast to coast, at the mercy of the weather, to knock at doors with you never know what behind them—friendship or hate or indifference; to wear rags and let them think you a beggar, rather than tell the truth about yourself and seem egotistical; to appear aged and dusty, the usual results of travel, though you have the heart and the eyesight of youth, and respond sensitively to everything worth while. This just isn't in your experience."

She took hold of one of his hands hanging limp and squeezed it. He thought best to let the hand remain limp a second or two longer.

"And I must say, when a stranger comes to the house with a good mind and a taste for conversation on serious themes, it might be well to seize the opportunity. Beauty to the vulgar is a vulgar thing, wit to the shallow is merely funny, comradeship to the stupid is nothing but shelter in the same kennel, but the noble life, the higher life, to souls like—"

"Like you and me," said Circe. She stretched up both her soft rounded arms, and her eyes were large and dreamy.



"That's the way to travel, Bob—no crowded roads, no punctures or delays of any kind."

"Yes, I suppose we'll all be traveling that way some day, but in the meantime, a good car with Kelly-Springfield tires all around is about the most comfortable and carefree way I know of."



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"I see what's on your mind," he said, "I've suspected it for some time, but our happiness will have a better chance of lasting if we agree to certain principles at the start. In the first place, I must insist that from now on you behave like a lady."

"God!" sighed Circe. "Sweetheart! Husband!"

"Husband, if you like," said Odysseus. "No love is worth considering if it doesn't look eternal when it begins. But I've no faith in marriages founded on mere passion. Friendship, I say—and mutual respect."

For the time being, she proved an extraordinary wife. She stood by the fence while he tended to the pigs, and complimented him on his thoroughness. She insisted on drying the dishes after each meal, and they would sing together at their domestic tasks. That is, he found she expected him to sing, and he tried to meet her half-way.

In the evening she encouraged him to talk, and frequently regretted that midnight came so soon, before he was finished with his finest anecdotes. It wasn't simply the breadth of his experience, she would say, it was the original phrase he always found, and the constant play of mind; he translated the trivial into universal truth.

And she wanted to hear of his friends—it helped her to imagine his background, it made her feel they had always been lovers. Helen and Briseis she thought a little pale, his adventures on the way home excited her more. The lotus-eaters, for example, though she couldn't understand the purpose of the enchantment—charms, like everything else in life, she contended, should be put to some good use. But the Cyclops delighted her. There, she said, was a person. Odysseus agreed, but added that the personality was excessive. Perhaps so, she admitted, but that was the encounter she would have best enjoyed.

The days, then, in true companionship, and the evenings passed in improving talk. Her affection did not decline. She persuaded him to let her wash the dishes—she disliked the growing roughness of his shapely hands; enough for him to wield the harmless towel. And she thought the pigs would prosper as well if cared for less systematically; perhaps an exaggerated culture might render them effete. So he cleaned the sty once a week.

At last, by gentle stages, she did the dishes entirely, while he rested after dinner, and the pigs cleaned themselves.

There are mysteries in love which man has not yet fathomed. Odysseus, wise for his time, could not understand why this steady increase in sympathy should not result in at least a maintenance of ecstasy. Circe was beautiful as ever, in outward proportions, yet he detected a slight let-down somewhere. There was a subtle decline in the spell she cast. The food didn't taste so exquisite, her voice showed symptoms of monotony, her long hair was less carefully braided, her gowns—well, she hadn't many, and perhaps he had grown accustomed to them.

He found less need for talking in the evening. A few casual words, perhaps, always cordial, but when once he had got his feet up on the couch, his thoughts, he noticed, went off toward other moments, far away; particularly he remembered his youth, some insignificant passages of it which curiously took precedence over heroic Troy and the distinction of the present moment. A bad sign, he feared. This back-looking mood betokens age.

Circe would speak to him, with a pleading kind of affection, and though the interruption made him irritable, she overlooked the impatience of his reply. Her approach had tenderness in it now, a motherly note. She was concerned about his health—an evil omen, if he had been shrewd.

"At least you ought to take a walk every day. Much as I hate to miss you for a moment, you ought to cover several miles before luncheon. For my sake, dearest—tomorrow morning."

Odysseus yawned and stretched himself. "All right—you come along too—it'll do us both good."

"I can't tomorrow, but another day, perhaps."

"Good. There's no hurry. We'll go together some time."

"Dearest, for my sake—tomorrow."

You can't say no to a woman when she's fond of you and means well. He started out in the middle of the forenoon, and for want of a better objective strolled over the path that had brought him to Circe's house. He recognized the spot where he had met the young man—and the watchful but sedentary dog—and the self-possessed stag. The pine-needles still put silence under his feet, but the spooky atmosphere of the forest had worn off. Here and there a cheerful sunlight streamed down between branches . . . And there was the rock he had climbed, to catch a glimpse of the chimney-smoke. Well, he needn't climb it again . . . And here was the shore, and yes, it was—the boat as he had left it, months ago.

A pleasant thrill went through him at sight of that neglected hull. He examined all the seams—only one leak, and that not bad; an hour's work would put all in good trim. A salt wind came down the coast. He threw off his cloak and set to.

Nothing but hunger would have stopped him, but after a while he grew faint, what with the unaccustomed toil and a light breakfast. He would get his luncheon, and when Circe had finished with the dishes, no doubt she'd like to return with him and inspect the skiff in which he had voyaged from fame to fame. She could watch him put on the last repairs.

On the way to the house he encountered, to his amazement, the original dog, lying by the path and surveying him with skeptical interest, as on the day of his arrival. He was prepared to see the stag again. When he reached the door-step, he noticed a large package on the porch, carefully wrapped and tied. In itself an innocent thing—but he had a mind to peek through the window before venturing inside. In fact, he was stepping carefully through the flower-beds when Circe came out, her most radiant self, charmingly gowned, and the two hounds guarding her.

"Awfully sorry to be late for luncheon—"

"Don't mention it," she said. "Your luncheon is ready. I've wrapped it up for you."

Puzzled, he looked down at the large package.

"It's food for the voyage," she said. "You can fetch the water yourself from the well."

He looked up for an explanation, but she didn't smile at him—she only looked mildly curious, not deeply impressed—in other words, as he had first seen her.

"A messenger has just come to me," she said, "disguised as a young man."

"From where?"

"Oh, from Heaven, or from Providence, or whatever you call it. I have just learned that it is now your fate to move on."

"Has the messenger a light mustache?" said Odysseus.

"He has, and a long sword."

Odysseus looked past her into the dining-room, and saw the youth who had warned him, now sitting at table and consuming excellent food.

He looked again at Circe, and then he considered the package at his feet.

"If it is my fate, I suppose I might as well go."

He picked up the bundle, and noted with satisfaction that it was heavy. Balancing it on his shoulder, he turned for farewell.

"Since we must part," he said, "thank heaven it's at the moment when our devotion is at its highest. I hate to have to fasten down a slipping romance. But love like ours, a bloom of the spirit—"

He would have said more, but the young man in the dining-room wanted to know why there wasn't salt on the table, and Circe went in to get it for him.



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When the Circus Came to Creille (Cont. from page 45)

share my astonishment at this curious relation of dates. The year before the war, yes; the year of the comet—had there been one—certainly; but the year of the circus . . . Tombarel nodded gravely, as he poured out the wine.

"Yes. It's true."

"Is the coming of a circus to Creille such an extraordinary event?" I asked, when we had helped ourselves to the *poulet Henri Quatre*, careful to be guided by Angélique's finger pointing at items of the dish that must not go unheeded.

"Mais oui, cher Monsieur!" cried the curé. "We in Creille are outside the whirl of opera tours and theatrical tours and tennis tournaments and tourists clamoring for casinos and hotels with *confort moderne*—by which he meant almost elementary sanitation—and racing bicyclists who pedal through France à grandes étapes, and also of circuses. We, on the top of this little mountain, in the middle of the wild Alps, are forgotten by man and would perish of decay were it not that God remembers us at every second."

"Yes. That is true," repeated Tombarel, who was a pious man.

I asked, as was natural, what induced this one and only circus to come to Creille. They both raised helpless elbows and hands. Apparently they didn't know, or had forgotten. Anyhow, one day in the year of Grace, 1913, a circus had descended that declivitous side road to Creille and had applied to the municipality for permission to pitch their tents in the immediate and ideal open space of the Place Georges Clemenceau.

It would have been folly to ban this miraculous visitation. Money poured into the town from all the surrounding villages. It was a great week, commemorated in scarlet letters in the memories of Creille.

That was all very well. "But," said I, "there must have been something more than the mere fact of the coming of the circus to have made so profound an impression on the mind of Monsieur le Curé."

Tombarel looked at the curé and the curé looked at Tombarel.

"That's true," said the latter once more. "In fact, there's quite a story—*toute une histoire!*"—one of the classic phrases which had prefaced so many of his queer tales.

"I thought so," said I. "Tell me."

Tombarel again exchanged glances with the curé, who held up his glass of Jurancón, the color of dark topaz, to the light. He shrugged.

"Why not?"

Tombarel began. The curé interrupted. Tombarel argued. The curé, after a few hasty mouthfuls of *haricots verts*, continued the narrative, until Tombarel swept him aside. So between the two of them I got a fair idea of what had happened when the circus came to Creille in the year of Grace, 1913.

The circus was pitched in the Place Georges Clemenceau. A poor enough little circus, it appears. A little tent of nothing at all, with canvas enclosure at the back, half a dozen horse-drawn vans and two wheezy, ramshackle motor lorries which, when fully loaded, could scarcely keep up with the horses.

It was called the Cirque Médriño; doubtless in the pathetic hope that the nebulous mind of the provincial would confuse it with the great Cirque Médano of Paris.

"No, no, mon cher Cabassol," cried Tombarel. "Let us begin at the beginning. The beginning is La Zublena."

"Tell me," said I, "who or what is La Zublena."

"But I have already told you—it is true, a long time ago—about La Zublena. You don't remember? When those two young rascals, Dominique Pogomas, whose name his father, our good Marius, would not read at the inauguration of the Monument des Morts, and César Garbarino quarreled over a girl, and César came home with a knife wound in his neck—that was La Zublena."

"I remember perfectly," said I. "Tiens. Wasn't her first name Marise?"

Tombarel laughed and waved the wine-bottle before he refilled my glass.

"It is only artists who are endowed with such a memory."

He repeated what I remembered he had told me years before about the lady. She was the drab, the pariah, the reproach of Creille.

When she had appeared bejeweled after the burglary of Les Arcades de Creille, of which the two youths of tragically ignominious ends were suspected, she had lightly said that a handsome gentleman in a great automobile from Nice had given her the brooch. The town had not believed the particular fact; but as a general statement—any gentleman in an automobile from Nice . . .

"Yes, yes," said the Abbé Cabassol. "She was like that."

She was apparently a wench, a quean, a hussy—everything a village maiden should not be. Her father was one André Zublena, who worked in the cement factory round the shoulder of the hill. This factory had been built on the site of the Castello Miramare which Camille Monniot had built many years ago.

The Castello had been bedeviled beyond conceivability of human habitation to suit the cement works, and now, in its turn, the factory had been abandoned during the war, and all was waste and desolation. But in 1913 the factory was going full swing.

André Zublena, hybrid Italian, was a laborer. A widower, he lived in a horrible broken-down dwelling with his daughter. Now, the proud Creillois abominated the workers in the new-fangled cement works. They were not *du pays*. They were outlanders.

They paid their way, of course, spent their money in the town, in order to live—an isolated little town, from time immemorial, derives its existence from the fact of its centrality. It is the market, the exchange, the clearing-house of the neighborhood. Surround it with factories and what it will lose in simplicity, it will gain in wealth. A self-evident proposition.

But all the same the little town proclaims itself entitled socially to turn up its nose at ill-bred newcomers. The staff of the cement factory were, according to Creille standards, of repulsive ill-breeding. They lived in a nest of insanitary habitations of which Zublena's was the worst and most overcrowded. They drank prodigious quantities of red wine, and as much *marc du pays*—raw distilled spirit from the grape—as they could get. They quarreled.

If they weren't as free with their money as with their knives, the good Creillois would have turned them out upon the barrenest of mountainsides. But since the money came to the Creillois, and the cement workers only knew each other, all was well.

I doubt whether this alien inferno included, all told, more than sixty souls. But from the description of my two excited friends, it took rank with the quarters seething with iniquity of all the capitals of the globe. It might have been the Subura of Ancient Rome.

"What has become of this quarter?" I asked; for, having known the town for some years, I had not come across a trace of it.

"It was burnt down during the war, after the cement company failed," answered Monsieur le Curé. "The vines of a bounteous Providence now cover its site."

Anyhow, this has nothing to do with 1913, *annus mirabilis*, when the circus came to Creille.

The point my two elderly cronies desired to make was that from the half-dozen horrible little alien hovels on the hillside, which they magnified into a seething, pullulating, myriad-inhabited suburb, emerged the girl Marise Zublena. She cared not for God, man or woman, said Tombarel.

"Pardon me, my dear friend," said the curé. "She had a blue fear of God. Man was her existence, and she snapped her fingers at

woman, became devout, psychol. "As a his sly mustard reticence. The The cur meaty- "Mar Elle etat ries, in thumper tensity of a wo greatest "Ta, our circ "We curé, with La "El to me. And the

There might word d mountai held a c was per It gave money, purse; b were co There money astound reechoed Fanfret; not her bills? S God-fea never ha For w the dec genera flashed well-rou guise, ti her hair the bar dreamer the Lan Moon Madem women There appare The end a soul- that the working that the lying on son of A time-ho Oh! t the mor perform within hands a brated Who see ever see You of Creil had seen into the of swar roared, thrill w deliciou Child void le one. Y Then costume hussar

woman, with phrases which it would ill become my cassock to quote. But she was devout. That is the only thing that makes her psychology interesting."

"As a man of the world," said Tombarel with his sly smile which twisted up a corner of his mustache, "you can appreciate the sophistic reticences of Monsieur le Curé."

The Abbé Cabassol threw up his hands. The curé in little French townlets despises the mealy-mouthed.

"*Mais non!* The Truth before everything. *Elle était garce des garces*"—the hussy of husses, in polite English—"but Monsieur"—he thumped the table and held me with the intensity of his dark eyes—"this infamous witch of a woman who believes in God has been the greatest problem of my life as a priest."

"Ta, ta!" said Tombarel. "Let us return to our circus."

"We haven't got to it yet," retorted the curé. "It was you who insisted on beginning with La Zublena."

"*Eh bien, cher ami,*" said Tombarel, turning to me. "There was this famous circus . . ." And thereupon he plunged into the story.

The Cirque Médrino was a success. It might not have appealed to the sensation-worshipper in great capitals, but to those mountain children of nature who gapingly beheld a circus for the first time, the stuffy tent was pervaded with the glamor of fairyland. It gave good value for the money—such a little money, within the capabilities of the slenderest purse; but in those days, the purses of Creille were comparatively well-filled.

There were honest souls who paid their money day after day to lose themselves in the astounding spectacle. The mountain gorges reechoed with the name of Mademoiselle Fanfretta, *La Reine des Equestriennes*—did not her title appear thus, in big print, on the bills? She disturbed the slumber of scores of God-fearing men with dreams that should never have been dreamed at all.

For when, before eyes that have only beheld the decorously garbed forms of their womenfolk generally in attitudes of customary toil, there flashed the vision of the Eternal Feminine—well-rounded, too—in fantastic, unimagined guise, tights, spangles, diamonds glittering in her hair, standing poised on one arched foot on the bare glossy back of a galloping horse, dreamers of the Orient, of the Far-Away, of the Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon may be forgiven by the judicious. Mademoiselle Fanfretta filled the minds of the women too.

There was also the ringmaster faultlessly appered in an unusual form of evening dress. The ends of his mustaches went up to his eyes; a soul-compelling creature. No one dreamed that these two were very care-worn, hard-working, humdrum husband and wife, and that the sturdy little boy whom the acrobat, lying on his back, kicked up in the air was the son of Auguste, the clown, the pathos of whose time-honored imbecilities shook the tent with elemental laughter.

Oh! the Cirque Médrino gave good value for the money, even before the second part of the performance, the great Lion Act, conducted within a steel cage that was erected by all hands around the ring, by the world-wide celebrated lion tamer, Carl Hansen of Copenhagen. Who in the wilds of the Maritime Alps had ever seen a lion?

You could not live within a five-mile radius of Creille with any sense of decency unless you had seen the lion. And when the lion stalked into the ring and swept the tiny amphitheater of swarthy faces with his tired topaz eyes, and roared, possibly through sheer boredom, a thrill went through the assembled humans and delicious fear gripped their hearts.

Children in arms were held up. "*Tiens, voilà le lion.* Now you can say you have seen one. You may never see one again."

Then, enter Carl Hansen, in swaggering costume, a cross between that of a Hungarian hussar of comic opera and a professional

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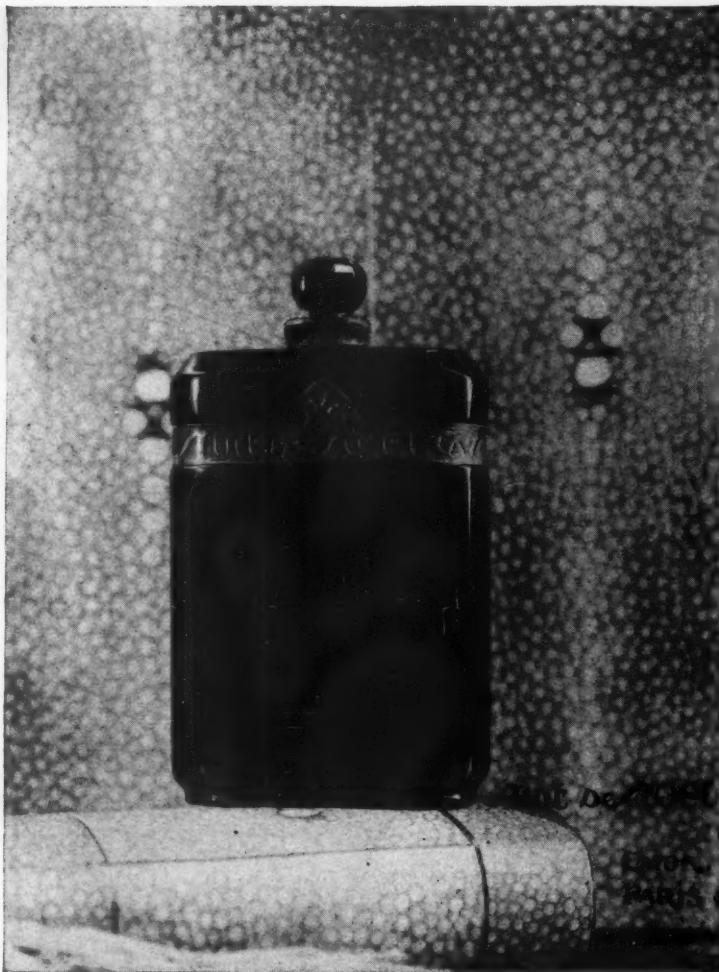
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skater, whip in hand, and the lion, a poor old spiritless, mangy lion, obeys him like a little dog, in spite of protesting and terrific roars, and goes through his tricks, sitting on a stool and jumping over fences, even though one was ablaze with fire. Another thrill.

And at last the beast lies down and the vast fair-haired Hercules of a Dane puts a triumphant foot on him and waves the tricolor extracted from his pocket. Then, all being over, as the phrase goes, bar the shouting, the lion trots off to the terrible little cage in which he performs must lead his home life, and Auguste comes in with a gun and looks about for the lion and takes an unsolicited call and sends the audience home grinning and happy.

All this, of course, from the vivid description of Tombarel, who, as Mayor of Creille, considered it incumbent on him to attend the first performance. And even he went again, as you shall hear.

"And you, Monsieur le Curé?" I asked. "Weren't you tempted to throw your frock to momentary nettles and assist at the spectacle?"

"Wait," said he, with a touch of humorous asperity. "It is Monsieur Tombarel who is telling the story."

"But where does La Zublena come in?" I asked.

"Ah!" laughed Tombarel, with a wide gesture. "The impatience of youth!"

I curbed the youthful ardor of my fifty years and let Tombarel proceed.

Now a circus is a little self-centered nomadic tribe and generally finds its temporary home on a bit of waste-land some distance from the town. It has its own perfectly good reasons for avoiding undue familiarity with the population.

Mademoiselle Fanfretta, for instance, has no desire to expose herself in frowsy dressing-gown, frying the family bacon in her caravan, and the lion is not to be stared at by an unpaying multitude. Outside the town privacy is easily maintained; but inside, as at Creille, it was somewhat difficult.

All the children of the place, callous to parental scoldings and beatings, clustered like bees around the caravans and fought for peeps through chinks in canvas. This was beneath the dignity of the ordinary adult, man or woman, who edged away sheepishly when a circus man said politely, "Monsieur (or Madame) this is private."

Besides, the adult population had the serious day's work to get through. But there was one person in Creille for whom such hints or prohibitions were ineffectual; and that was Marise Zublena. On her the circus worked an irresistible fascination.

She was twenty, in the pride of her gipsy beauty, claiming, as it were, to be her own mistress. When she felt like cooking the midday meal for her elderly drunkard of a father, she did so. When the great world summoned her forth, she obeyed the call and left her father to fend for himself.

For years he had tried to beat her into submission; but on his last attempt—so the neighbors said—she had torn the stick from his hands and thrashed him soundly. She had a dreadful reputation, which aided her to keep up a splendid isolation in the precincts of the circus.

Curious girlhood escaping from their duties in couples for a morning moment, in order to spy into the inner workings of this wonderland, would say to each other in baffled annoyance: "Ah voilà La Zublena," and decorously fade away, while Marise, hands on hips, would watch them off the horizon with a contemptuous smile.

La Zublena had attended the opening performance. Trust her instinct for that. And the very next morning she began to prowl round the tents and caravans.

First she met the clown, a battered little man in an old shirt, nondescript trousers and a cloth cap.

"Hé, ma fille, where are you going?"

"I want to see the lion."

"The lion has gone to Nice to have a tooth

22 or 45 is there an age when women must cease to look young?



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stopped. *Ouste, ma petite! On ne passe pas.*" He spread out both arms, as he might have done a couple of years later at Verdun. Just then came from behind the jealousy pegged square of canvas at the back of the tent an unmistakable growl.

"You lie—you and your tooth," said La Zublena.

"That," said the clown, "is a donkey whom we're training to be the lion's understudy in case he can't perform. *Files.*"

So she filed with saucy dignity and stared into caravans and lay prone, with the children, and looked under the edges of the circus tent and was rewarded by the sight of the acrobat rehearsing his act with the little human football. She couldn't see much, the intermediate seating blocking out the view; but she saw the loins and thighs of the man working vigorously, and the legs and body of the child when he stood on his feet.

Now it happened—and on such unimportant happenings do many million human destinies depend—that one of the groups of the circus was a far-off connection by marriage of the Abbé Cabassol. He had written: "Monsieur le Curé, I am So-and-So, and my Aunt Virginie and Madame your respected mother were friends, and you once gave me absolution, and I am coming on Saturday to Creille with the Cirque Médrimo," et cetera.

So the curé, vaguely remembering a decrepit and tiresome lady called Virginie, who poisoned various happy hours of his childhood, but possessing the kindest of hearts, set out to call on his correspondent. He found him, which is neither here nor there; but what does matter is that he nearly fell over Marise Zublena, as she was lying on her stomach with her eyes glued to the interior of the tent.

There came an instant of confusion during which the girl, her dark skin aflush, scrambled to her feet and faced him. There came the obvious question:

"*Mon enfant*, what are you doing here?"

"It is to see the lion, Monsieur le Curé."

"What lion?"

"The lion." She recounted the scene of the previous night. She wanted to see him quite close.

He read her the necessary lecture. Had she no shame? A young woman of her age, neglecting all her sacred duties at eleven o'clock in the morning, in order to lie on her stomach and look under the edge of a tent for lions, like a child of six—it was subversive both of common sense and Christian morality. And, by the way, it was a long time since she had come to confession.

He shook his finger warningly at her and went his way. But most of the day and the next morning, Marise Zublena hung around the privacy of the circus-fold, in the obsessing hope of seeing the lion, whose second performance she had enthrallingly witnessed.

And then she came upon the vast blond Dane, Carl Hansen, the lion tamer.

Carl was a lonely man, a stranger, fallen on evil fortunes, and only recently had he joined the Cirque Médrimo. He was at a loose end, with nothing in the world but a decaying lion to love. He appeared before her like a conquering god; she before him like the incarnation of the dusky southern dream of woman. They talked, he in his halting French. She pleaded:

"Oh, let me see the lion—quite close. You don't like giving anybody any pleasure!"

How could the poor lone devil resist? He took her to see his lion. A while later, having a splendid Scandinavian thirst, the lion tamer invited her to cross the square with him and drink beer at the Café Pogomas. Marius Pogomas came out to their table on the terrace. He glowered at the girl.

"Here, you, my girl," said he, in the patio of the mountains, which the Dane could not understand. "You have a pretty insolence to come and sit at my café, where you know you are not wanted."

He had good reason for disliking La Zublena. Had she not helped in the ruin of his

only son, Dominique, not very long before? Dominique who, for her sake,—although there were no actual proofs, he knew—had robbed Les Arcades de Creille, had stuck a knife into César Garbarino, and now was as bad a soldier as ever did military service.

"I invite you to make yourself scarce," said he.

La Zublena regarded him with an ironical smile. "First," she replied in French, "let me present my friend, Monsieur Hansen, tamer of lions at the circus."

Pogomas stifled his wrath. He was not afraid of the fair, smiling giant; but commercial prudence told him that an affront put upon Monsieur Carl Hansen would be an offense to the Cirque Médrimo. He inclined his head politely. He had already had the pleasure of serving Monsieur. Mechanically he passed his napkin over the japanned iron table.

"*Monsieur désire*—? And your—?" A wave of the hand gave any definition you please to Monsieur's companion.

The lion tamer ordered beer, Marise a petit verre. This she did with the deliberate intention of shocking Pogomas; for no respectable girl in Creille would ever have dreamed of ordering raw cognac. She also desired to pose as someone remarkable in the eyes of the huge Dane.

Such was the beginning of relations between La Zublena and Carl Hansen, tamer of lions. The affair quickly became town property.

That very evening, so did the fates decree, Monsieur le Curé met her again. Passing through the church to prepare for vespers, he found her kneeling on a chair near the chancel fingering her beads. The little wretch of a girl!

"What more natural?" interjected Tom-barel. "She was thanking the Almighty for letting her see the lion!"

The curé dismissed him for a *farceur* and went on with his denunciation of La Zublena. There never was such a girl. One never knew when one wouldn't find her in the church, as devout as an aged dowager of stainless antecedents. And the more wicked she was, the more was she scrupulous of religious observance . . .

She glanced up, as he passed by, with the soulful eyes of a Madonna. He addressed her, in the rough and ready fashion of village curés.

"*Dites donc, ma fille*, what enormities of sin have you been committing?"

"None, Monsieur le Curé. I only felt that I wanted to pray."

"Pray then. You may deceive me, though not so very often. But if you think you're deceiving the *bon Dieu*, you're making up a nice little fire for yourself in the future."

Injured innocence breathed, "Oh, Monsieur le Curé!" and he strode off.

He ran into her the next afternoon; and this was a more important encounter. On his homeward way, in one of the narrow turnings off the Grande Rue, he came upon an unusual scene of feminine upheaval. The cobblestone path between the crazy houses was barred by a dozen frantic, fighting women.

He quickly perceived that they were not fighting one another, but that there was one object of their attack in the midst of them—a disheveled, torn and bleeding woman, who cursed and clawed in desperate self-defense. With brawny arms he cleared a way through and thundered out:

"What does all this mean?"

In the shocked silence, all drew away from the severely handled Zublena. She rushed to him.

"Monsieur le Curé! Save me! These wicked women! I was passing here quite quietly when that one, *la mère Pazzi*, insulted me. I answered back, you understand? We came to blows. One doesn't let oneself be insulted for nothing, *n'est-ce pas?* And then they all came from their houses——"

There was the shriek of half a dozen voices. Ah, yes! If he had seen the poor Madame Pazzi, good mother of a family, being torn to pieces by a tigress, Monsieur le Curé would have done the same as they!

"Silence, everybody!" he commanded. "Madame Pazzi, why did you insult Marise Zublena?"

They all answered. Madame Pazzi had merely called her by the exact name by which such as she should be designated. And why? He narrowed down the inquiry, and elicited the fact that La Zublena had been discovered being kissed and cuddled by the lion tamer in a little wood on the outskirts of the town. He looked around, catching their eyes.

"Nothing but that?"

Apparently there was no more than that. Some children had seen the enamored pair sitting side by side and had spread the glad tidings through the town.

The Abbé Cabassol knew his flock. He rated the women in their own unpolished tongue. Was there a woman of them all who hadn't been kissed and cuddled by some man before she married her husband? Not one! He bound them over, under dire ecclesiastical penalties, to keep the peace. And then:

"Marise Zublena, you will come with me."

She walked humbly, in her outraged beauty, by his side.

"Merci, Monsieur le Curé. You have saved my life."

"I ask myself why," he grumbled.

"Because you have a kind heart, Monsieur le Curé. *Un cœur de petit Jésus.* You understand the temptations of a poor girl situated like me, and you forgive."

"I don't forgive at all," said he. "Only the *bon Dieu* can do that. If you are seeking absolution, you know where to find me."

"Oui, Monsieur le Curé," she said demurely. "I will come."

"Good," said he. "And now, go home and wash yourself. You look more like a woman of the Revolution than a civilized being."

She laughed and darted off. The Abbé Cabassol went on with a thoughtful brow.

The next morning he found on his early breakfast table an immense bowl of wood-strawberries, fresh as the dew. In answer to his question as to whence they came, his old housekeeper said it was La Zublena who had brought them. To have picked that quantity she must have been in the woods at dawn.

"Satanée petite fille!" cried Tombarel in admiration.

The curé gave us to understand that the layman might derive amusement from the spectacle of a girl possessed by Satan, but to an ecclesiastic it was peculiarly and particularly disconcerting.

"And all the time," cried Tombarel, "that she was praying in church and fighting in my good streets of Creille and picking wood-strawberries for our *révendissime* friend, she was living in the caravan of Carl Hansen, the tamer of lions, on the salaried staff of the Cirque Médérino. His assistant had died or fallen ill or deserted—I don't remember—and La Zublena had volunteered to take his place."

This was so. Which of the two it was who came, saw and overcame, would be a pretty question. For suddenness of mutual attraction, Rosalind's picturesque account of the loves of Oliver and Celia—"there was never anything so sudden but the fight of two rams"—would be the only one adequate.

More than this. La Zublena fell in love with the lion as well; and the lion, as far as she could judge, fell in love with La Zublena.

She fed him, she raked out his cage, while Carl Hansen sat by on a stool and smoked his pipe. She talked to him as she used to talk to a goat on the hillside, the only companion of her early childhood, and the lion was perhaps even more companionable.

She declared to her *cheri*—which was Carl—that she was happy. Brutus—which was the lion—knew her and loved her and would eat out of her hand. He would eat out of anybody's hand, poor old Brutus, as a matter of fact; but Carl saw to it that there were iron bars between her hand and the lion's mouth. Carl knew all there was to be known about lions.

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amorous giant and the affection of his four-footed partner was the thrill of appearing before the public of Creille as a member of the Cirque Médérino. In tights and doublet, fished out by Carl from the circus wardrobe, she displayed to her fellow townsfolk—in her own quite justified estimation—limbs and figure unequalled in Creille.

She wore the blond wig of a delicious transformation and a jockey-cap perched at a devil-may-care angle. The clown who had treated her so rudely, being a friendly soul, instructed her in the art of make-up.

In the pink-cheeked radiant blonde, not a soul among the ingenuous audience recognized the despised, rejected, raggle-taggle Zublena of Creille.

At the performance she had little to do save swagger around so as to show off the importance of Carl and Brutus. She gave a hand, not too obvious, in the erection of the high steel cage around the ring. Now and again, whip in hand, she admonished the clown during his semblances of inefficiency in his job of anxious fitting of bolts and hooks, to the immense joy of the audience.

She set the stools and the barriers on which Brutus should jump. She entered the arena with Carl and bowed, and just before the released Brutus came bounding in—instinctive stretching of legs on the part of the cramped beast—she slipped away and stood on the flat-cushioned barricade, with her eyes on man and lion, as though responsible for their performance.

For their performance did La Zublena indeed feel herself responsible. No riotous dreams of the potentialities of glorious life had ever approached this in gorgeousness.

And not a soul in Creille knew. No one in Creille, she swore, should know until the very end of the last performance, after which she would fade away resplendent into the vague great world where the Cirque Médérino, with Carl and Brutus, lived free and happy under the generous stars.

And yet, such was the psychology of this Satan-possessed girl, baffling to my two friends, that she, all the time of her glory shamelessly and insolently stolen from whole population, always found opportunity to creep for a few minutes into the church, and to leave at the presbytery her offering of fruit or flowers, in spite of blistering reception by the old woman who looked after Monsieur l'Abbé Cabassol. But she was equal to any blistering.

"What concern is it of yours, old—" Here a full-throated and detailed description of the lady which would have sent the denizens of any conventional institute into huddled and shivering horror and would have stimulated by its imaginative novelty a platoon of the Foreign Legion. "What is it to do with you that I regard Monsieur le Curé like blessed bread. It is the least I can do to bring him my little tribute."

She would leave the old servant gibbering but obedient.

"Salanée jeune fille," repeated Tombarel. "But it is true. In the confusion of her otherwise crystal brain, she looked on him as the rock of her salvation."

It was the last performance of the only circus that had ever come to Creille. The tent was packed. The management had put what was magniloquently entitled the box of honor at the disposal of Monsieur le Maire.

It was in the center of the ring and boarded off from vulgar touch by rough planks covered with red cotton. Over the broad barrier was draped the tricolor so that all could see that Monsieur le Maire had come in state.

There were only four chairs, two in front and two behind. In the former sat Tombarel and Monsieur le Curé, in the latter, Monsieur Guido, the maire adjoint, and Tombarel's friend, Doctor Suzor, who came from the neighboring townlet of Escarolles. There had been dispute as to seats, the curé desiring to give way to the stranger guest; the guest insisting on Monsieur le Curé taking his official position. All was

arranged.

On his first still with good Curé; then reappear in ceremony good Abbé He shook hands with him, enjoyed him, perhaps in his ears, he made his collection everybody.

Made more time of the horse show was going to have promised his collection everybody. Besides, men but a few moments responsible and admiring Mon Dieu! that his legs a

He mopped chief, exhausted which a flagged play clown, his and when seat of his "Mais,

His three too, suffered They were unrestrained.

There care for the ere the whole fascinating

"Ah, her blond red— to perform.

"That," assistant.

"Belle face that only woman of

She set cage was in the broad more exultant Creille. A proceeded, shameless, oral box a le Curé who frequent con to be known to fool Monsieur

And the to happen. Something in front of into the ring began to run best to help. The bear

But just before a glistening himself over his body with his shoulder down to the

Carl, for too late, head with turned away fired into the tamer and he was driven off.

The cur from the clad and command, was safely benches a

arranged. The performance began. All went merrily.

On his first entrance the clown stood stock-still with gaping mouth in front of Monsieur le Curé; then he turned tail and scuttled off, to reappear in a silk hat with which he saluted him ceremoniously. The audience, including the good Abbé Cabassol, shrieked with delight. He shook hands with the clown. He was out to enjoy himself. What the clown sacrificed perhaps in broadness of jest unfit for clerical ears, he made up for in intensified comedy of business.

Mademoiselle Fanfretta wore a fresh costume of tights and spangles and her untamed horse shone with extra grooming. The circus was going on to Vence, and Monsieur le Maire had promised to write a little word in its favor to his colleague of that town. So it behooved everybody to do his best.

Besides, Creille had treated them not as men but as gods, and their artistic tempers responded. The simple *curé* laughed and admired and clutched Tombarel's arm. *Mon Dieu!* Did he see that? Was it possible that human beings could do such things with their legs and arms?

He mopped his brow with his red handkerchief, exhausted, after the clown's lion act, in which a tiny pony not inartistically camouflaged played the part of lion and chased the clown, his tamer, ignominiously round the ring, and when he fell down, dragged him off by the seat of his baggy trousers.

"Mais, c'est tordant!" he cried.

His three companions confessed that they, too, suffered from the same twists of mirth. They were all of the Midi and knew how to be unrestrained with dignity.

There came the interval. Very few went out, for the erection of the great steel cage around the whole circumference of the arena was a fascinating thing to watch.

"Ah, here's a new one!" cried the *curé*, as the blond red-cheeked jockey-capped girl came in to perform her strictly rehearsed duties.

"That," said Tombarel, "is the lion tamer's assistant."

"Belle fille," said the *curé*, blissfully ignorant that only a few days ago he had called her a woman of the Revolution.

She set the simple properties and, when the cage was fixed, retired as usual and stood on the broad ledge of the circular barrier, once more exultant in the bluff she was playing on Creille. As the performance of Carl and Brutus proceeded, she crept round until she stood shameless, a foot or two away from the mayoral box and the penetrating eye of Monsieur le Curé who, she was aware, apart from infrequent confession, knew everything there was to be known about her. It was a thrilling joy to fool Monsieur le Curé.

And then the thing happened. It all seemed to happen in two or three horrible seconds. Something gave way. The section of the cage in front of the mayor's box fell flat with a thud into the ring. The scared lion bounded and began to run hither and thither. Carl did his best to head him off to his exit. He failed. The tent rang with yells of terror.

The beast saw the open space and leaped. But just before he leaped La Zublana, her eyes a glistening horror, had jumped and throwing herself over the *curé*, face upwards, protected his body with hers. And the poor brute caught her shoulder with his claw and ripped the arm down to the wrist.

Carl, following him a fraction of a second too late, dealt him a mighty blow over the head with an iron bar. The lion, half-stunned, turned away. A couple of blank cartridges, fired into the lion's eyes from the pistol which the tamer always carried in his belt, dazed him and he entered the ring submissively and was driven off.

The *curé*'s three companions extricated him from the mangled body of the outrageously clad and fainting girl. Doctor Suzor took command. The audience, as soon as the lion was safely driven off, clambered down from beaches and would have broken down the



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trumpery plank barriers had not Tombarel exercised his authority. The circus-folk came running across the arena with a stretcher.

"That's good," said Doctor Suzor. "Where did you get that?"

It was part of the circus equipment. One never knew when there might be an accident.

They put the girl on the stretcher. Tombarel, the doctor and the *cure* accompanied it across the ring. A short command rang out, and the hands lifted up the heavy steel section to keep the populace from following. A disheveled blond giant met them at the ring exit. He stood over the stretcher, quaking in fear.

"Marise, ma petite Marise!"

Said the *cure* to us, dramatically: "Marise! I rubbed my eyes. All the time there seemed to be something diabolically familiar about the girl in spite of her fair hair and pink face and unusual attire. But only then did I realize it was La Zublena.

"I give you my word, Monsieur, that I, whose profession it had been for many years to stand by death-beds, some of them inconceivably tragic, just fainted—spun round like a top and fell into the sawdust. This child of nothing at all, this blackest of all my sheep, had given her life for mine! *Mon Dieu!*"

He threw up his hands in the widest of gestures.

"But did she die?" I asked stupidly.

"*Mais non!*" cried Tombarel. "It would take herds of lions to kill La Zublena. She is here in Creille at the present moment, since the end of the war. Let me tell you."

He took up the tale, while the *cure*, his knotted fingers curiously shaking, filled a comfortable old pipe and poured out half a liqueur-glassful of Tombarel's venerable *marc de Bourgogne*.

They took La Zublena to Nice—thence to Marseilles for pasteurization. Everybody paid—the Cirque Médriño, Carl Hansen, Tombarel, the *cure*; and—miracle of miracles, for in peasant France no one pays money without the assurance of personal advantage—the inhabitants of the town came with offerings—sous, francs, even five-franc pieces—to Monsieur le Maire, as contributions towards the fund for the restoration to health of Marise Zublena.

The romantic story, for once a true one, had flashed through the town. In the twinkling of an eye she had transformed herself from the despised drab into the heroine. Monsieur le Curé had not realized how greatly he was beloved by his flock. For saving his life La Zublena had established herself in popular esteem as the Jeanne d'Arc of Creille.

Women who a short while before wouldn't have touched her prayed for her recovery. Men who regarded Père Zublena as the last word in depraved cement workers sought him out and feted him and, in their enthusiasm, so filled him up with strong liquor that he providentially died. The last obstacle to the canonization of Sainte Zublena was removed.

The war broke out. Nothing more was heard of her. But her memory lingered until she was on the point of becoming a legend.

Well, the war came to an end. One day the sainted lady appeared in Creille, accompanied by a little girl. She was expensively dressed in widow's garb, the veils of which hid her maimed arm. As soon as the conveyance that brought her from Nice had deposited her before the Hôtel du Commerce, and the grinning porter had taken charge of her slender luggage, she was recognized and acclaimed.

Her progress through the streets was triumphal. Women scurried out of doors to join the throng. Half the town accompanied her to the house of Monsieur le Maire. Tombarel sent for the *cure*, who dismissed the populace with his blessing.

When the three were alone she told her artless story. When she recovered from her accident she joined her Carl and helped him to look after his little girl who had been put out to board in Marseilles. As the poor fellow had an

impossible wife in Denmark whom, apparently, he couldn't divorce, Carl and she had not been able to marry. "It was not my fault, Monsieur le Curé, was it?" she asked.

Naturally the *cure* shook his head. He wasn't quite so sure about that.

Anyhow, her irregular life lasted but a short time. Brutus never quite recovered from his shock at Creille. His faith in the preordained fixity of human things had gone. He grew soured and bad-tempered and one day wiped the unfortunate Carl out of existence.

She faced the world at war, with a small child and seven hundred francs. Then she became *marraine de guerre* to a sergeant of artillery who, two years afterwards, she married. Truly she had no luck, she lamented; for Etienne Dubose, foreman in a motor-tire factory at Clermont-Ferrand, and of the most honorable family, died gloriously for his country, leaving her with little beyond indisputable papers vouching for her married estate and her perfect respectability.

These papers she showed to the mayor and the *cure*. As to her means of livelihood after her husband's death, she was vague. She had worked to keep herself and the little one.

Tombarel very early had sent for Angélique and given instructions for the child to be taken away and stufed with jam.

"And the little one?" he asked. "Does she think you are her mother?"

"*Bien sûr*, Monsieur le Maire."

The *cure* called her a *brave fille* and wiped the corner of his eye with his red handkerchief.

"And what are you going to do now?" asked Tombarel.

She didn't know. She had her little economies that would last her some time. The Hôtel du Commerce was not very dear, and they would give her a room at a special price. She seemed to have developed into an exceedingly capable woman.

Suddenly Tombarel started he 'rom her glowing calm by bringing his fist down on the arm of his chair.

"*Mon ami*," said he to the *cure*, "I have the inspiration of my life! The late Mère Flammariol's Débit de Tabac is still vacant. I will go to Monsieur le Préfet tomorrow. The patron saint of Creille and the widow of a heroic sergeant of artillery is well worth a Débit de Tabac!"

"Débit de Tabac?" I cried. "At the corner of the Grande Rue? Kept by the Cleopatra of Shakespeare and the Marguerite of Faust? Let me see, what was the girl's name—Elva?"

They both beamed on me. Why, of course. That was La Zublena and the lion tamer's daughter. I remembered then how she had kept her left side covered with the gay Chinese shawl.

"But how does the lady manage to afford pearl necklaces and emerald rings?" I asked.

Their faces fell. The *cure*'s more than Tombarel's.

"My dear fellow," said the latter, with an ironical smile over the hand which held his pointed beard. "You are treading now on most delicate ground. What our excellent friend here has heard in the confessional is his secret. But what I've heard, outside the confessional, isn't mine. Once La Zublena, in spite of all her virtues, always La Zublena. Your poet Shakespeare talked of a chartered libertine.

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"And she is as devout as ever?" I asked.

"Why, yes," replied the *cure*, with as helpless a shrug as I have seen convulse a human frame. "She haunts the church. These are not the secrets of the confessional I am telling you. But if I did my duty, I would say: 'Out of this, scarlet woman of Babylon! Come

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not until you repent.' But"—I'm afraid he used most unclerical language which, in the interests not only of his cloth but of his sweet and kindly soul, I must suppress—"but—what would you have? The *satanée* girl saved my life. There could be no purer sacrifice.

"When I see her beautiful arm hanging limp at her side . . . I am a man, all the same"—he blew his nose violently—"and she is bringing up the child, Elva, like a little angel of the *bon Dieu*."

I was sorry for the *cure*. He really found himself, in his relations with La Zublena, between the devil and the deep sea.

"What's going to be the end of it?" I asked. He drained his glass of the old *marc* of Burgundy and regarded me with a queer smile.

"I am waiting," said he. "We people of the church are patient and pertinacious. In another thirty years' time we shall be leading this erring and lost sheep, like a little lamb, into the Fold."

Darkened Rooms

(Continued from page 53)

tin trumpet in three parts which fitted into each other. He showed it to Boyd.

"You had better have a look at this thing. There's no trick about it."

Boyd examined it and saw nothing wrong with it. Then he made a suggestion.

"In case anything unusual happens—you don't object to my searching you a little? This is a scientific test, you know."

"Is that quite necessary?" asked Mallard, afraid of hurting the feelings of a man who, after all, was his guest.

"Quite necessary," said Boyd. "Personally, I suspect everybody in this sort of game. Even my own sense of evidence."

"Quite right," said Emery calmly. "I suppose you don't want me to strip? If so we had better go upstairs."

"Oh, we needn't go as far as that," said Boyd. "Just ordinary precautions."

He felt Emery's body, passing his hands over that velvet jacket and his black trousers.

"What's that in your pocket?" he asked.

Emery Jago looked amused, and pulled out of his pocket a small bottle of aspirin.

"That's for headaches," he explained.

"Nothing tricky."

"Miss Jaffrey," said Boyd, "will you be good enough to search Miss Jago? Superficially, of course."

"If she will let me," said Rose, rather shyly.

"Quite all right!" said Belle, standing up.

Rose passed her hands over the girl's body.

"How thin you are!" she cried. "You ought to take plenty of cream, my dear."

Boyd accepted that as evidence that nothing was concealed in the girl's frock. Nothing bulky, anyhow. But as a scientist, with a sense of responsibility, he was not satisfied until he had gone round the room shaking the curtains, looking into the vases, and giving a general scrutiny.

"If I were a spirit," said Mr. Jaffrey, "I'd resent all that impudent curiosity, Sir Scientist!"

"As a matter of fact," said Emery, "it does spoil the contacts, sometimes. Any hostile influence is not conducive to good results."

"Without scientific tests there are no good results," said Boyd, with a slight harshness of tone.

Emery arranged the chairs round the gate-legged table in the center of the room. They stood about three paces from the table on which the trumpet lay.

Then he turned and spoke gravely with a touch of dignity and command.

"I don't object to Professor Boyd's suspicions but I must ask for quietude and reverence. There must be no moving or whispering. Nor can I allow any interruptions or hostile comments. I want you to sit on those chairs with your hands on your knees. The room, of course, will have to be in darkness."



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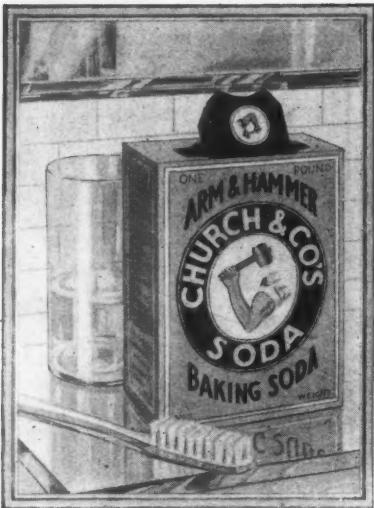
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"Why?" asked Boyd. "That seems to me very suspicious."

"Professor Boyd," said Emery grimly, "you know perfectly well, I think, that darkness is necessary in most cases for any supernormal phenomena. It is a psychological, as well as a psychic law, merely because light distracts the attention and lets in exterior impressions. I am not going into a trancelike state exactly, but my mind has to be perfectly blank, and my nervous sensibilities must not be jarred by visibility which keeps one alert and conscious of one's environment. This is not only the result of experience but it is also common sense, as I think you will agree. I speak to you as a psychologist."

"Well," said Boyd grudgingly, "I don't deny that altogether. Still, I regard it as a weakness from the point of view of evidence."

"The evidence is circumstantial," said Emery, "as I am sure Mr. Mallard will understand. If a spirit voice says things which are not within the knowledge of the medium—and which are properly verified—that is very good evidence of supernatural truth, it seems to me."

"I agree," said Mallard.

Emery turned to him and bowed slightly.

"In that case I will ask you to take your seats and for someone to turn out the lights. I shall sit here, if you don't mind, as it is farthest away from the table. My sister will sit on the other side of the room so that there can be no collusion between us. Sit down, Belle."

Rose Jaffrey was impressed by Emery's dignity and gravity. She noticed that his eyes were fastened on her and seemed to be looking at her hair. She had noticed that before. Her hair seemed to attract his attention for some reason. There was a kind of softness in his gaze and a little smile about his lips. He was certainly a very strange young man and rather frightening. There was something uncanny about him. "Fey," as Scotch people would say.

She felt a cold nervous shiver down her back when Boyd switched off the electric light, leaving them in almost complete darkness, except for a very faint light which came through the drawn blinds but did not penetrate the room. She sat next to Mallard and could hear his quiet breathing. On the other side of her was the girl with the white face, a yard away, utterly quiet.

It was perhaps ten minutes or more before anything happened. Then the trumpet on the table began to move. It was luminous round the rim and that circle of phosphorescence rose a yard, as it seemed, above the table and then dropped back, exactly as Mallard had seen it when alone in that room in Brixton. Distinctly they could hear its metallic touch on the polished board. Presently it scraped along the table slightly and rose again, jerkily at first, and then made a clean swoop high up and remained there, poised but unsteady.

Rose stretched out her hand and found Mallard's hand and clasped it. She felt frightened, and was glad to feel Mallard's human touch. He raised her hand to his lips there in the darkness.

Emery Jago's voice rapped out: "Someone is moving. I must insist on perfect immobility."

Rose's hand slipped back to her lap.

Vague, queer voices were coming out of the trumpet, very faint and indistinct. They sounded like several people speaking at once in different voices, all blurred. Then one voice, quite clearly, but as though a long way off, said "Get off the line!" It was followed by a curious whirring sound and then by several words in French.

"Non, madame, je vous en prie."

After that there was absolute silence for several minutes until, quite suddenly, a voice rang out clearly through the trumpet:

"All right, Ivo. The juice is strong enough now."

Mallard drew a sharp breath and his chair creaked slightly.

There were vague sounds again of people jabbering far away, for quite a long time. Then another voice spoke in a metallic sound: "Ivo speaking. Hullo, Adrian, old boy! You seem to have shifted your whereabouts. I don't know this house . . . It's new to me."

Professor Boyd was making notes on some slips of paper which he had brought for that purpose. Writing in the dark, many of his words were illegible as he afterwards found, but he guessed at them, or rather put them in from what he remembered. Once he was called to order by Jago who said, "I hear some paper rustling." But he took no notice of this and let the sheets drop to the floor as he finished them.

He was taking down the words spoken by the spirit voice and they remain as a record, more accurate perhaps than those remembered by Rose and Mallard, except for a few missing sentences and illegible words.

"There's something I want to tell you . . .

It's about Eve."

(Boyd said he did not hear the word as "Evelyn," but both Rose and Mallard were quite sure of that.)

"She's on the sea somewhere . . . Blue sea . . . Bright sun. Very warm . . . Mediterranean . . . I stood near her . . . There was a man . . . tall . . . good-looking . . . couldn't remember."

(Here there was a gap in Boyd's notes followed by three or four illegible words which he said were "amorous" and "evil passion." Rose and Mallard agreed.)

"She's not loyal, Adrian . . . Not loyal, old boy . . . Wants watching . . . And jealous . . . Jealous of Rose . . . Freddy laughs about Rose. Freddy Dook. The rotter."

(There was a long silence after that. Boyd put a note on his slip of paper: "Trumpet gets tired. Falls. Two minutes later rises again.")

"I went Egypt . . . see old pal . . . Arthur . . . I'm bringing back souvenir . . . In this room . . . Egyptian . . . Present from Ivo . . . Hullo, hullo!"

That was as far as Boyd could go in his notes. He had finished his slips of paper and was afraid to stoop down and pick them up to write on the other side. In any case, he was interested in the girl by his side, Jago's girl. Now that his eyes were becoming more accustomed to the darkness he was almost certain that she was leaning forward in her chair, and that there was something sticking out of her mouth—some dark thing like a rod or tube. Also her breathing was peculiar and suspicious. Sometimes he could not hear her breathing at all. At other times he could hear her taking long-drawn breaths.

The voice through the trumpet was saying something about the sea again, and Egyptian pyramids, and hot burning sands.

Boyd rose quietly from his chair. He had made up his mind to grab that girl by his side and hold her until someone turned up the light. He was not at all sure that she wasn't making that voice sound through the trumpet by some kind of trick, although she was three paces away from the table.

"Sorry!" he said suddenly.

His hands grabbed her and she gave a scream of terror. Instantly the trumpet dropped with a clatter to the table. She was struggling in his hands, squirming like slippery eel.

"What on earth!" exclaimed Mallard.

Emery Jago's voice rang out harshly. "This is abominable! Turn up the light, someone."

It was Wilfred Neal who switched on the light, so that everyone was dazzled and blinking.

Boyd still held Belle Chubb by one arm.

"Sorry," he said again. "I began to get suspicious. This young lady—"

He was feeling her about her thin flat chest and then passed his hand across her lap.

"Oh!" she cried. "You made me jump out of my skin, almost. It isn't fair."

"I must protest," shouted Emery angrily.

"I thought I'd come to a gentleman's house." His eyes blazed with a sudden rage out of a dead-white face. Then he spoke to the girl he called his sister. "Are you all right, Belle?"

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"It's quite all right, Em," she answered, and the suspicious Boyd noticed that she said, "It's quite all right," and not "I am quite all right."

At this assurance Jago became less angry and turned round to Mallard with a remonstrance against Professor Boyd's behavior.

"It doesn't give the spirits a chance," he said. "It's hardly fair or decent, sir, as I think you will agree. How can you expect to talk to your brother when the whole thing is jangled by hostile interruptions? I'm ready to submit to every kind of test but not to sheer brutality like this."

"I think you went too far, Boyd," said Mallard. "Honestly, I can't think what you were trying to do."

Boyd apologized with a nervous laugh. He stooped to pick up his notes, and crumpled them into his breast pocket.

It was Rose Jaffrey who gave a sudden cry of astonishment. She was standing close to the table where the trumpet lay, and seemed to be staring at something which was next to the trumpet, as though she could not believe the evidence of her eyes.

"What, Rose?" asked Mallard anxiously.

Then he too murmured a word of surprise.

"Anything startling?" asked Boyd, going toward them while young Neal strolled up and raised his eyebrows.

"That's strange!" said Emery Jago. "Has anybody seen this thing before?"

Standing on the table there by the side of the tin trumpet was the figure of an Egyptian god, with a tall head-dress and pointed beard. It was a bronze, green with age and much dented, on a wooden pedestal.

"Osiris!" said young Neal, who had been to Egypt for a winter in Cairo.

He took the figure up and examined it curiously, and then glanced at Mallard with a smile of incredulity.

"Probably a fake," he said. "They make these things by the thousand for American tourists and others."

"It looks real to me," said Mr. Jaffrey. "They don't fake the hand of time like this. Look how green it is! The point is, how did it come on to that table, gentlemen?"

"It was certainly not in this house before," said Mallard. His hand shook as he took the figure from Mr. Jaffrey.

"What's your explanation, Mr. Jago?" asked Rose.

Emery shrugged his shoulders slightly and smiled at her.

"I have no doubt myself, Miss Jaffrey," he said quietly. "It's what we call an *apparition*. Young Ivo has conveyed it from Egypt to this room. That's my theory. I may be wrong."

He turned to Mallard and questioned him politely: "Didn't the voice say something about the Mediterranean, and the Egyptian desert?"

"Yes," said Mallard.

"He mentioned some lady's name," said Jago. "What was it, Belle. Did you catch it?"

"Evelyn," said Belle in a low voice. "That's what I heard, Em."

Mallard did not tell him that Evelyn was the name of his wife and that she was cruising on the Mediterranean with Freddy Duke, whose name had also been mentioned. He was asking himself if there was any possible way in which this medium could have heard of his wife's voyage with that good-looking blackguard. He could think of no way—unless Boyd had told him, or Rose. Who else knew in this neighborhood or in London? His man, Sadler, perhaps. Sadler knew everything, overhearing telephone conversations, reading letters, perhaps, which Mallard left carelessly about.

But Sadler could not have talked much with this fellow Jago, who was down at the cottage, and in any case would not chatter to a stranger about his master's business.

He heard Boyd speaking. "You might have it concealed about you, Jago. You must admit that."

"You searched me, Mr. Boyd," replied Jago

calmly, as though indifferent to this suspicion.

"Not properly," said Boyd. "I'm entirely unconvinced. Your sister may have had it under her frock. We're not children, you know."

"Perhaps if you were more childlike," said Emery Jago gravely, "you might learn more of the spirit world."

He turned to Rose Jaffrey. "What do you think?" he asked. "Are you so skeptical?"

She looked into his eyes. "I don't know what to think," she said in a troubled way. "It makes me feel—frightened."

He smiled at her. "It's comforting, really, when one looks at it in the right way. I should say you had the psychic gift, Miss Jaffrey. I wouldn't be surprised if you could get into touch with the other side—quite easily."

"Oh, I don't want to," she said quickly, and went over to Mallard, as though she had no need of the other side while he was near her.

"Gentlemen," announced Mr. Jaffrey in a solemn voice. "I for one am utterly convinced that we have been privileged to get a glimpse through the great gate."

"Our doubts are traitors,

And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt."

"Let us not be afraid of attempting to cross that narrow bridge between Time and Eternity."

He spoke for some time with Jago and invited him to hold his next séance in the old house at the end of the lane.

"Don't you approve, Mallard?" he asked. "What better atmosphere than my old house for spiritual communications? It vibrates with the spirit of the past."

"Haunted?" asked Jago curiously.

"Beyond a doubt," said Mr. Jaffrey.

Emery Jago was thoughtful. "I might try a few spirit photographs," he suggested. "At the worst, I should only waste a few plates."

That night, when Rose and Jaffrey had gone, and the brother and sister had been taken back to the cottage by young Neal, Mallard came into Boyd's room again.

"Boyd," he said, "tell me. How did that fellow know about Evelyn and Freddy Duke and that Mediterranean cruise?"

Boyd, who was smoking his last pipe, laughed. "The voice called him 'Dook' . . . And that gardener's wife—Mrs. Lymposs—doesn't she gossip a good deal, old man?"

Mallard was disturbed by that suggestion. "She certainly chatters. I never thought of that. But she doesn't know about Evelyn."

"These things leak out," said Boyd. "Mrs. Smith's butler tells Mrs. Jones' maid. It's the freemasonry of the servants' hall."

Mallard shook his head. "There's more in it than that. I recognized Ivo's voice. I could swear to it."

"I wouldn't if I were you," said Boyd. "Autosuggestion beats everything. You can't trust your own senses. I could have sworn I saw something sticking out of that girl's mouth when the voice was speaking. I'm not at all sure I didn't. But it's quite possible I was wrong. She had nothing in her hands when the light went up."

"Can we be sure of anything?" asked Mallard.

He went to the window and stood there looking out into the garden, white under the moonlight. Presently, Boyd heard him give a heavy sigh before he turned and left the room with a quiet word or two.

"Good night, old skeptic. Sleep well."

On the afternoon of the next day Belle Chubb, as she had been in the old days—Belle Jago, as she now called herself—went round to have tea alone with Rose at the old house, and took her crystal with her.

Emery had arranged to come on later to see what he could do in the way of spirit photographs before the second séance, and was spending his day with Professor Boyd who was making some tests in thought-transference—

rather startling, as he confessed to Mallard that day at luncheon.

"By the bye, Mallard," said Boyd, "he was rather interested in that portrait of Ivo over the library fireplace. Kept staring at it as though it fascinated him."

"Why not?" asked Mallard. "If Ivo was really speaking through that trumpet—"

He caught a glance from young Neal and flushed slightly. The boy was smiling with ironical disbelief.

He broke off from that line of thought abruptly, and changed the subject. "What about some tennis this afternoon, Billy?"

"Oh, splendid!" said the boy. "I'm pining for a game."

"Good. I'll meet you on the court at three o'clock."

Boyd raised his eyebrows, and looked alarmed. "If I were you, old man—"

Mallard smiled at him in a challenging way, like a schoolboy who has made up his mind to play truant.

"I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle. This lazy life down here has made a new man of me."

Boyd waited till after luncheon when Billy went to change, before making another protest.

"That game of tennis," he said. "It's madness, old man. You mustn't do it."

"Oh, I shall go easy," said Mallard. "There's no risk."

"It's a deadly risk," said Boyd angrily. "Don't be a blind fool, Mallard."

Mallard laughed with the old light in his eyes. All through luncheon Boyd had noticed some change in him, as though a cloud had passed from his mind.

"The fact is," he said quietly, "I slipped away this morning—while you were busy with that fellow Jago—and paid a visit to the local vet. I mean my old friend, Doctor Harding. He pooh-poohs that Harley Street man. Says my heart is as sound as a bell, except for a bit of a jolt due to overwork and slight strain. He's not at all against a moderate amount of exercise. So that's that, and I feel much more cheerful, after weeks of morbid terrors of which I'm thoroughly ashamed."

"My dear old man!" said Boyd, and grabbed Mallard's arm, affectionately.

Mallard thumped him in the chest and rumped his red hair.

"You come and watch me take down Billy's pride!" he said. "Gad, it's a frightful time since I held a racket in my hand."

He went to put on flannels, and Boyd watched him win at six-two, six-five, six-love. He played with all his old grace and form, with that perfect forehand drive which was untakable by young Neal.

Round at the old house at the bottom of the lane, Belle Chubb had a quiet afternoon with Rose Jaffrey, whose father had gone out to see some friends in the neighborhood, so that they had the place to themselves.

Belle was less shy now though not very talkative at first. Rose took her about the garden and showed her the flowers, which she seemed to like, and a brood of young chicks, which called to some mother-love in this white-faced girl. She gave a scream of delight and said, "Aren't they darlings!" and took one up in her hands to kiss its fluffy little body.

Afterwards they sat on the lawn, so soft and closely mown, under the shade of a big old cedar tree, and these two girls made a strange contrast, of which perhaps they were both conscious now and then—Rose in a summer frock with long sleeves through which her arms showed, and Belle in her little black slip, rather shabby and worn, with her thin legs tucked under it.

"You're lucky!" said Belle after there had been a moment's silence between them. She looked up at Rose with a sidewise glance.

"What makes you think that?" asked Rose, smiling at her.

Belle Chubb shrugged her thin shoulders. "All the blooming luck, I should say! Better than life in Brixton, I don't think."

"Aren't you happy in Brixton?" asked Rose.



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"I dare say life can be just as good there."

"Think so?" asked Belle, with dark irony.

She laughed with a shrill note in her voice. "Not much fun over a photographer's shop with the trams going by, and nothing but crystal-gazing, with the blinds pulled down. I used to be a dancing-girl—in the Turvey Troupe—before I took up with Em. I mean before we set up as mediums, and all that. That wasn't much of a life either, come to think of it."

Rose asked a question which had been in her mind most of the afternoon. But even now she hesitated to ask it. It seemed hardly fair, and she had always played fair.

"Does he believe in all that? I mean the spirit voices, and so on. Is he quite sincere about it?"

Belle suddenly took fright. At least she answered cautiously, with a furtive look at Rose Jaffrey.

"Oh, he believes all right. Mostly! Of course sometimes one can't tell what's true and what isn't. Em doesn't dogmatize."

"And you?" asked Rose. "Do you believe in the spirits?"

Belle seemed to be struggling between a desire for truthfulness and professional caution. For a moment, perhaps, she leaned to the side of truth in this garden with this friendly actress, so pretty and kind, with those innocent-looking flowers.

"I hate the whole business. I wish I'd never had nothing to do with it, I tell you straight. But I see things in the crystal, sometimes. Pictures. Faces and things. One has to believe, as far as that goes, I will say."

"How strange!" said Rose. "It's all very mysterious. Sometimes I feel frightened when I think of these things."

Belle was silent again for a minute. Perhaps she thought she had said too much, for when she spoke again it was in a sullen way, and as though she were repeating her professional patter.

"Em knows all about it. It's the supernatural faculties and psychic energy. We get into touch with the infinite. Em can explain it all, if you want to know. Psychological phenomena, and all that!"

Presently she stood up. "Hadn't we better do a bit of crystal-gazing?" she asked. "Business is business, and that's what you asked me for, wasn't it?"

"No," said Rose truthfully. "I asked you to see my garden. Don't let's bother about the crystal."

"It's my job," said Belle. "I left it in the summer-house in a bit of brown paper. We may as well get on with it. Em will be angry if I play about all the time."

She insisted on fetching it, and sat down again under the shade of the cedar tree with the crystal on her lap and her head bent over it. "I don't know whether it'll work out-of-doors," she said. "I've never tried before."

"Queer little creature!" thought Rose, and she felt sorry for the child and yet was curious to know if she could see anything.

She saw nothing for quite a long time. Once she said, "Oh, hang it!" as if angry with it, and fretful.

Then suddenly she began to speak in a low voice. "I see a face. It's a man's face. Clean-shaven. Middle-aged. Gray hair. It's a sharp kind of face. Why, it's Mr. Mallard. Same as he was last night—only different, somehow. Wearing white things. Not well, it seems to me. Looks ill. In pain, I should say. Struggling with himself . . . That's funny! He's fallen down. He's——"

She had her thin fingers gripped on the crystal, but suddenly she pushed it sharply off her lap so that it rolled onto the smooth grass and lay there with the sun sparkling on it.

"Oh, it's all rot!" she said. "One imagines it all. It's silly!"

She stared curiously at Rose Jaffrey who was looking at her with frightened eyes.

"Don't you get scared," she said. "It's the subconscious mind. That's all. That's what Em says when he wants to be scientific."

"You've frightened me!" said Rose. "Mr. Mallard——" One hand crept to her breast.

"He's your lover, isn't he?" asked Belle.

"Yes," said Rose. "My lover. My love! . . . What did you see? . . . That last picture——"

"It was all fancy," said Belle. "One sees what one thinks of. Last night, at the séance, I was taken up with him because of his handsome face and his kindness to me. It's always like that, as a rule. It's like dreaming when you're awake. I'm sorry if I scared you. Honest, I am."

It was only ten minutes later that Mallard came into the garden with Boyd and Emery Jago and Wilfred Neal. He was still in flannels open at the neck after his victory on the tennis-court.

"We've had a great game," he said cheerfully. "My first for weeks."

"And he flogged me round the court," said young Neal, laughing. "Great form!"

"How white you are, my dear," said Mallard, going up to Rose and taking her hand.

"It's the sun," she said. "Rather too hot without a hat."

She put a hand on his arm and the color came back into her face. She had never seen her dear egoist looking so well and happy.

That afternoon Emery Jago took some photographs of Mallard and Rose in the drawing-room of the old house, and then went upstairs with Belle and Mr. Jaffrey (who had come back to tea) and exposed some plates in the bedroom with the little powder-closet which was supposed to be haunted. There was just a chance, he said, that he might get a spirit photograph, although he was very doubtful about it.

Still, Jago said, it might be worth while wasting a few plates on the chance of getting a snap of any earth-bound spirit who might pass by. He was certain the house was haunted, and even Belle admitted that she felt "funny" in that room upstairs where the old lady was supposed to walk. Perhaps it was the effect of the four-poster bed with its hangings of green brocade which made Belle have "the creeps" in this room, as she confessed to Mr. Jaffrey.

He was very much interested in Emery Jago's idea of exposing some specially sensitive plates, and arranged for him to develop them in the dressing-room at the other end of the passage.

Mallard was left alone with Rose while the photography was going on, young Neal strolling off to invite Boyd down to tea, as otherwise he might feel deserted.

They went out into the garden again and Rose watched Mallard make a few shots with the croquet balls, hitting the stick from the far end of the lawn with a skill that was aided perhaps by a little luck.

"My eye is as good as ever it was!" he said, boyishly pleased with himself. "I took down Billy's pride just now. He thought he was going to give the old un an awful whipping!"

He looked happy after that victory. Rose had never seen him looking so bronzed, and well, and splendid. Lately, she thought, he had been melancholy sometimes, as though some shadow were on his mind—Evelyn's desertion of him—but this afternoon that touch of gloom had passed and his voice had its old gay and careless ring.

"I'm like a kid when I see a ball of any kind," he said, and came over to her with the croquet mallet under his arm.

She offered to play him a game, but with sudden contrition he remembered that she had complained of the sun and he suggested a shady place where they could sit and look at the view and talk if they felt like that, or keep silent if it seemed better. She had the gift of beautiful silences, he told her.

It was not one of his own gifts, as she reminded him with a smiling candor, but as a matter of fact he kept silent for quite a time, leaning back in a deck chair while she sat on the grass by his side with her head against his knee.

She was half inclined to tell him of that right she had had when that girl had seen him

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in the crystal. It had given her a shock for a few moments of foolish terror, until he had come into the garden laughing and cheery after his game of tennis. It showed how foolish it was to let one's imagination be caught hold of by that kind of thing.

Rose wished her dear egoist had not become so much interested in spiritualism. It was all rather alarming—and morbid in a way, she thought. She wondered what had made him attracted by it suddenly. It was his love for Ivo, perhaps. He had never really got over his grief at that boy's death and always spoke of him as though he had been endowed with all virtue and knightliness.

"How charming it is here!" he said presently. "How good life is in old gardens like this, with the sun warm on one's face and a sense of happiness in one's soul."

"What makes you so happy today?" she asked. "I saw it in your eyes when you came in with Billy. A shadow lifted!"

He was tempted to tell her about that sentence of death from which he had been reprieved now—all the agony he had gone through because of that infernal specialist and the young jackanapes from the hotel in Knightsbridge. One day he would tell her all that . . . So she had noticed a shadow and its sudden lifting! She seemed to notice the slightest change in him and all his play-acting had not deceived her about that melancholy which had settled down on him until this new hope of life and health.

"I oughtn't to feel so merry and bright today," he said. "I had a letter from Evelyn by the morning's mail. She's not coming back. She and Freddy Duke are staying in Cairo. They will be glad if I hurry up the divorce business! I suppose I ought to rage and storm, but somehow I don't feel like it. I only feel glad to be here in this garden, with the sun on my face and your dear head against my knee, and a complete sense of well-being."

"I'm glad," said Rose.

He touched her hair for a moment caressingly before he gave a light-hearted laugh.

"God's in His heaven. All's right with the world! . . . I wouldn't be surprised if you have strawberries and cream for tea."

"I have," said Rose. "But I'm sorry about Evelyn. For her sake."

"Poor little Evelyn!" said Mallard, and in his sigh was all the remembrance of that marriage which had begun in love.

Then he made a quick gesture as though thrusting a brief on one side, impatiently.

"That case is finished. I'm afraid the verdict is against me. One of my failures . . . Well, I'm not going to let it take the color out of this garden or the scent out of those flowers—or the happiness out of my heart. I'm afraid I'm still an egoist. Self-preservation is the first law of life."

"Bless your happiness," she said, and shifted a little on the grass to look up into his face. Why did he look so happy, this afternoon?

He looked down at her with smiling eyes as though he read that question in her eyes.

"I'm afraid it's physical, partly," he said. "Quer how the body and brain react! That game of tennis set my circulation going, I suppose. But it's spiritual too, I hope. It seems silly to say so, but somehow I feel a kind of assurance that the next world—the other side—is not merely an illusion of the human mind anxious for survival. I believe it's true. I believe there's God—some spirit of Goodness—behind all this."

He looked across the croquet lawn to the woods and the line of hills beyond the garden, shimmering under the warm sunshine.

"Who's converted you, skeptic?" asked Rose. "Emery Jago and his tin trumpet?"

She spoke almost flippantly, but there was a tremor in her voice, and she took one of his hands and put it to her lips.

"Not that," he said, "though I think there's something in it . . . I wouldn't say it wasn't Ivo . . . but I think it may be some words that keep ringing through my head. 'Love has no death and spirits meet across the bridge.'

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Boyd says they came out of my subconscious mind. Very likely! But wherever they came from they seem to express some faith in me, and that's good enough.

"Lately I've been groping through darkness like a man in a tunnel. Now I seem to have come out of the tunnel, quite suddenly. It's as though I was aware of the spirit—God, if you like—in all this beauty about us. I feel like the fellow in John Masefield's poem. 'The Everlasting Mercy,' wasn't it?"

"Teach me," said Rose quietly. For a moment there was a faint mist of tears in her eyes.

"Oh, it's all very vague! Only an acute sense of happiness, with hope ahead."

"Let me share it," she pleaded. "Give me half your hope."

He looked down and saw her upturned face, and for a moment, which seemed a long time, he looked into her eyes with a kind of wistfulness for the beauty of her face and all the loveliness in her.

"All that I have is yours," he answered gravely. "All my love, as you have long known, Rose. The love of a middle-aged man, growing gray."

"No!" she said. "A lover's love. My dear, my dear."

She was on her knees on the lawn under the old tree through which the sunlight came, touching her hair. Her hands, those exquisite hands which people watched when she played her parts, faltered up to his chest with a caressing touch and she bent her head towards him. He took her head in his hands and kissed her on the forehead and then once on the lips, as her body rested against him.

"An eternal pledge," he said presently, when she had drawn away again with a deep flush of color in her face. "Love everlasting, my dear, between your soul and mine. Is that a promise?"

"And thereto I plight thee my troth," she answered, and though she smiled her eyes were wet.

They both rose and stood together, holding hands, as Mr. Jaffrey came out of the house calling them.

"Rose! . . . Mallard, my dear friend!"

"What is it, Father?" asked Rose.

He did not notice their emotion or the flame of color in her face.

"Come!" he said. "There are wonders and portents in the house. That remarkable young man has been developing his photographs. One of them is very startling. It's the one he took of our friend here in the drawing-room. There is a spirit face above his shoulder. Beyond any doubt."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Mallard.
"Whose face?"

"Perhaps it is for you to say," answered Mr. Jaffrey gravely.

He led them back into the house.

In the drawing-room Jago was examining some wet prints from a small dish filled with acid. He was holding one up to the light.

"It certainly looks like a face," he said.

Belle Chubb was on the other side of the table and looked sharply at Mallard.

"You see, Mallard," said Mr. Jaffrey. "It's the one Mr. Jago took when you were standing by the fireplace. Observe that luminous patch above your right shoulder. In the center of it is the face of a young man, very distinct. Have a look."

Mallard took up the print and stared at it, and for a moment his face became pale.

"It's Ivo's face," he said. "Ivo—as I last saw him—"

There was silence in the room, as though all of them were awestruck by this recognition.

"There is no death!" said Mr. Jaffrey.

The words he spoke reminded him of some quotation from his inexhaustible store of memory and he declaimed them in his rich reverberating voice:

"There is no death! What seems so is transition;

This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

Rose Jaffrey leaned over Mallard's shoulder and stared at the wet print.

"Are you certain?" she asked tremulously. "There's no doubt about it," said Mallard. "It's like that portrait over my fireplace. The same poise of the head, and the smiling eyes, rather ironical of life."

"Yes," said Emery, "I noticed that portrait. I was almost certain it must be your brother. Wasn't I, Belle?"

"Yes, Em," said the girl.

He gave a possible explanation of the phenomenon, doubtfully.

"Of course, that image on the plate may have been a projection of some mental memory of mine. I may have retained the vibrations of that portrait and then transferred them somehow onto the negative. If you don't care to believe in a psychic interpretation—and it's very risky—there may be some natural explanation—the mind operating in a mysterious way. Not that I pretend to understand that sort of thing. Professor Boyd might give a better theory."

"Confound old Redhead!" said Mr. Jaffrey impatiently. "I confess he annoys me sometimes by his deliberate materialism. What do you think, my dear sir?"

"I," Mallard answered quietly—"I prefer to think that Ivo has been here—that he is here now. Lately I have seemed to be aware of him close to me, with a sense of comradeship. It sounds rather foolish, but I can't express it in any other way."

"It's probably true," said Emery Jago. "It's the fundamental idea of our psychic faith."

"Of all faith," said Mr. Jaffrey.

That evening, after tea, Mallard walked home with Boyd and young Neal. They had arranged to come back again after supper for a séance in the old house where Emery Jago and Belle were staying on, at Mr. Jaffrey's invitation. Mallard was whistling as he went up the lane. He walked ahead a few yards at a brisk pace, Boyd lagging behind with Billy discussing that spirit photograph which both of them declined to believe.

"I believe it's a deliberate fake," said Boyd. "That fellow Jago photographed the portrait over Mallard's fireplace and then exposed it on the same plate with Mallard, in Miss Jaffrey's drawing-room."

"I agree," said Billy, "although I must admit there were one or two differences. The collar was not the same."

"Oh, he may have retouched it a bit," said Boyd. "That's easy, I imagine."

"Mr. Mallard believes in it," said Billy. "He was quite angry when I expressed my doubts."

"He's a bit emotional," said Boyd. "Most lawyers are, I notice, although it's against the popular idea. Besides—"

He checked himself, not caring to say anything about the emotional crisis which Mallard had been passing through because of that shock about his health, before going to see that respectable old doctor in the neighborhood who had pooh-poohed the specialist.

Mallard turned suddenly, checking his pace.

"Come on, you laggards!"

He laughed at them, and waited until they came up, and then put his hand on Billy's shoulder. "Well, young fellow, how are you feeling after that tennis of ours?"

"A bit stiff, I admit," said young Neal.

"Lord! This modern youth!" Mallard exclaimed, giving the boy's shoulder a friendly punch. "I'm game for a ten-mile walk."

"Go easy, old man," said Boyd.

Mallard laughed cheerily. "Hark at our scientist, with his creaking bones and bleak eyes. Come on, Boyd. Brisk up!"

But he stopped again at the turn of the lane to look over a gate at the distant view across his own field. "Pretty good, that," he said. "Wonderfully good!"

The sun had caught the tops of the distant trees with their massed foliage, setting them on fire, it seemed, in a splendor of golden light, while the hills beyond were a long line of deepest purple.

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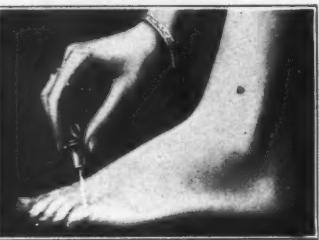
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"God's in His heaven: All's right with the world!" cried Mallard, raising his hands with a gesture of triumphant faith.

"Don't you believe it," said Boyd. "Not so far as the world is concerned. It's all wrong!"

"No," said Mallard. "Not for those who have a sense of beauty, and good-will in their hearts, and some touch of faith in a life beyond. Like Billy, here. Eh?"

Like himself now, though perhaps he didn't care to say so. Remembering his words with Rose, it is easy to guess why he felt happy and uplifted. She had pledged her love to him, in a spiritual way, unspoiled by passion. Perhaps, too, that letter from Evelyn had given him a sense of freedom, although he had resolved not to make use of it yet to speak of marriage.

Probably he was right in thinking that his sense of physical fitness and his new hope of health were the chief cause of his exaltation of spirits. That was his egotism again and the animal man eager for self-preservation. And yet one cannot underestimate the sense of spiritual awakening that had come to him like a sudden conversion from his old skepticism. Rose's love again had something to do with that, and perhaps those experiences of Emery Jago's, which had certainly influenced his mind and turned his thoughts to the mysteries of life and death.

It was curious, for instance, that he had that awareness of Ivo's presence, apart altogether from spirit photographs and spirit voices. Even Boyd was startled by the gladness and vivacity of his face when he turned and spoke to Neal.

"Billy," he said, with a challenging look, "I'll vault you over this gate for sixpence! One hand, and over you go."

"Nothing doing," said young Neal. "I'm too stiff, sir."

"Well, watch me."

"Be careful, old man," said Boyd.

Mallard laughed, touched the gate with one hand, and was over with a bound, gracefully, lightly, like a Greek athlete.

"Your sixpence!" said Billy.

Then Boyd gave a cry of alarm. Mallard stood for a moment in the field with his left hand pressed tightly against his ribs.

"That's funny!" he said. "That's—"

He gave a groan and staggered a pace or two and fell with a kind of sideways spin with his left arm twisted under his body, and his face in the grass.

"Good heavens!" said Billy. "He's hurt himself." He was over the gate in a second stooping over the man to whom he owed most things in life.

Boyd climbed over the gate, catching his foot in one of the bars and falling over the other side. He struggled up and ran to Mallard and stood over him shouting angry and almost blasphemous words.

"You fool! . . . you blasted fool! . . . Didn't I warn you? . . . What the devil did you do that for, Mallard, old man . . . Oh, God in Heaven!"

"What's the matter with him?" asked young Neal, turning round with a dead-white face.

"Go and fetch some brandy," shouted Boyd, "and look quick about it. You little fool. All this crazy sport—"

He spoke as though it were Billy's fault, that vaulting over the gate, this collapse of Mallard.

Young Neal ran like a hare to the old cottage at the end of the lane. Rose Jaffrey was in the garden with Belle Chubb.

"Hello!" she said as the boy dashed in. "Who's in a hurry?"

"Brandy!" he said breathlessly. "Mr. Mallard—he's very ill."

For a second or less Rose Jaffrey stared at him while all the color died in her face. She looked at Belle Chubb with a sudden terror in her eyes, remembering something. Then she fled into the house to fetch the brandy.

"Is he dead?" asked Belle Chubb, in a toneless voice. She too, who was always white, was now more blanched, remembering something she had seen in a crystal.

"Dead?" said young Neal. "No, of course not. No! He was perfectly fit—"

Rose came out again with a little decanter of brandy. "Where?" she asked.

"The gate at the corner of the field."

He seized the brandy from her roughly, and dashed away without another word.

Rose ran after him and caught up to him . . . Later, when Mr. Jaffrey came with Belle Chubb and Emery Jago, they found her weeping over Mallard's body, kissing his face as he lay on his back staring up to the blue sky, with his white flannels open at the neck. Young Neal was leaning against a tree, his body shaken with sobs, while Boyd strode up and down in an anguish of rage and grief.

Adrian Mallard—so vital—so much in love with life—that "dear egoist" as Rose Jaffrey called him—had vaulted across the Gate.

For a week or two the news of Mallard's death was a shock to all his friends. Even for longer than that there were sympathetic references to his great loss to the bar, at legal banquets and public dinners. Several of the judges expressed their regret at the sudden passing of an eminent and brilliant counsel who had maintained the highest traditions of the Law and had been clearly marked out for a most distinguished career, had he been spared.

Other men who had known him at Oxford and in private friendship spoke about him with a touch of emotion and a kind of incredulity that he of all men should have been struck down in the prime of life. "Mallard dead! Why, he seemed to have the gift of eternal youth—so vital and good at games, and all that. It makes one think a bit. 'In the midst of life' and so forth . . . Poor old Mallard!"

A few remembered him more poignantly, just those who felt that some of their own life had died with him; his man, Sadler, who had served him with a silent devotion, and Professor Boyd who had been his most intimate friend, and young Neal who had regarded him with hero-worship, and Rose Jaffrey who had loved him; and Evelyn, his wife, who had abandoned him, but out in Cairo with that other man she had chosen, wept bitterly for a time so that the other man was very much annoyed.

Rose Jaffrey was most stricken. She too, like Evelyn, had wept her heart out on the night of his death, frightening her father next morning by her look of anguish. He had guessed that there had been a little sentiment between his daughter and her distinguished friend, but had never suspected that Rose had been so deeply in love with him, or he with her.

Indeed it was only gradually, even now, that he realized how much love there had been between them, and the revelation was rather alarming to him, because it seemed likely to affect his daughter's career and happiness. She was ill towards the end of the summer and found it difficult—impossible even—to learn her part for that new play which was to give her a very great chance of reputation—Barrie's latest and most beautiful work, exactly suited to her personality and art.

He helped her to learn the book but she could not memorize the lines and broke down crying once when he bullied her a little.

"You put no spirit into it, my dear! You haven't your heart in it."

"My heart bleeds," she said, and burst into tears.

He was angry with her. Her genius, her art, all the tradition he had bequeathed to her, all his teaching, seemed to matter nothing to her now. She was limp and listless at a time when all London was waiting for that new production. She refused to see the photographers and interviewers who came down to the old house for advance publicity, and to Mr. Jaffrey that was very disappointing. After all Mallard was a middle-aged man. It was absurd of her to fret so much over his death. A charming man, certainly, but not more than a good friend.

"I loved him," she said with another rush of tears. "I shall never love anybody else, Father."

"My dear," he said, "you will have a thousand lovers and one of them will be the right

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one. But you're young enough to wait, and your art must come first—for years to come."

He was startled and annoyed—even indignant—when Rose received a letter from a firm of solicitors informing her that the late Mr. Adrian Mallard had left a will written the night before his death bequeathing her all his estate, with the exception of a legacy to Wilfred Neal and some bequests to friends and servants. It included his country house with its furniture and pictures, and his furniture and personal belongings in his flat in town.

"Rose, darling," said Mr. Jaffrey, "I don't want to pry into your private affairs—and I am not narrow-minded or puritanical—but it seems to me strange that our poor friend should have left you his fortune like this."

"Why strange, Father?" asked Rose, rather coldly, as though she resented some suspicion in his mind.

Mr. Jaffrey hedged a little and his thin face flushed. "You know the world, my dear. It always suspects the worst, especially of people in our profession."

"I was never his mistress, Father," said Rose, "if you mean that."

The candor in her eyes abashed him. He was shy of her when she looked at him like that and spoke so bluntly.

He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it before answering her. "My little Rose! You and I know each other. I was only thinking of your reputation with a public that worships you. It's very precious to me."

"It means nothing at all to me," she said, and shocked him horribly.

"You ought to see a doctor," he told her. "I'm afraid you are rather ill, my dear."

That was true, but no doctor could cure her. Mallard's death had left her with a sense of emptiness and desolation. It was only when he died that she knew how much she loved him. There had hardly been a hint of passion between them, except, perhaps, twice when for a moment or two she had been shy of something in his eyes and voice that day they had been together in the wood, and then again in the porch of Compton church.

She had liked his friendship—perhaps it had flattered her, and she had smiled at his amusing egotism, and then gradually had come to love him for his kindness. It was only on that afternoon when he had been so happy and had talked to her of life and faith that her heart had yearned towards him as a lover. She had leaned towards him and let him kiss her. She knew then that her soul was pledged to him, as he had said. But even then it was a spiritual pledge and she was only aware that she loved him with passion when he lay dead before her.

Something died in her too at that time, or at least was dreadfully wounded. Something went out of the beauty of life, she thought. She was very broken. Even her courage went for a time, so that she could not face up to her new part and shrank from its responsibilities. How could she face an audience again with the smiling charm of one of Barrie's women when she had to struggle to keep from weeping?

It was only her remembrance of Mallard's mind—so many things he had said to her about himself—that made her go through with it all, after those weeks of mourning and many tears. He had loved courage and the sporting spirit. "Whatever the adventure of life," he had said, "let's go through with it without whining."

She remembered those words one day when she slipped round to his house—hers now!—one evening before going up to town for rehearsals. Professor Boyd was there looking over Mallard's papers and doing some work about the will—those bequests to friends—and for some time he talked gravely and tenderly of his friend whose loss he felt desperately.

Then she left him and went about the house alone and shyly as though trespassing there, though most things belonged to her. She opened the wardrobe in his bedroom and put her face against some of his clothes hanging there, as though the touch of them brought her nearer to him. "My dear!" she said in a whisper. "Speak to me. Help me to be brave."



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She stood with her face raised to his portrait, listening with all her senses for some answer from him. But there was no answer, and only the banging of a door by a gust of wind through the open window. It made her start.

"My nerves are all wrong," she thought. "I shall have to be careful... Courage!"

That visit to Mallard's house, and some sense of contact with his presence there, did give her a renewal of courage, and she made a vow to play the game as her lover would have wished. That night her father was surprised to hear her laugh again, and delighted when she offered to play him a game of chess, not guessing that she was forcing herself to take an interest in the little things of life and get back to cheerfulness.

She cried out for courage again in her dressing-room on the opening night of Barrie's play. It was true that her nerves were out of order and they played her a dreadful trick before she went on the stage. Every word of her part disappeared from her. She could not remember even her first line, and was panic-stricken.

"What on earth shall I do?" she cried.

Wilfred Neal had just left her, wishing her "the best of luck." She saw him very often now and loved his friendship because he spoke so much of Mallard and was a link with him. Other friends were in the house on this first night. Boyd was going to sit with her father in the second row. Her unknown worshipers had been waiting in a queue for hours. And now she was going to let them all down. Her mind was a complete blank. Not one word could she remember, and for the first time in her life she knew the horror of stage fright.

"God help me!" she whispered, and leaned against the wall of her dressing-room with her hands clasped above her head.

The call came for her and she heard it with terror. She was going to make a fool of herself before all her friends and this crowded house.

Suddenly her mind called aloud to Mallard.

"Help me!" she cried inside her mind. "My dear, my dear, I need you now! Come to me and give me courage!"

Someone was speaking to her inside the room. "It's time, Miss Jaffrey. Less than half a minute. Aren't you well? Good Lord—how pale you look!"

It was the producer, very anxious on this first night.

"Coming!" she said.

Strangely and suddenly her own nervousness passed from her completely as though some hand of grace had touched her. It was as though her friend had answered her. She had a conviction that he had heard her cry for help and that his spirit was close to her. She felt marvelously at ease, wonderfully confident. She was smiling when she slipped through the wings onto the stage and heard the greeting from all her friends in that crowded house—and they were all her friends that night.

"It is my dear egoist who is helping me," she said to herself. "I am playing to him."

That queer little smile of hers remained on her lips and in her eyes all through the play. It suited the part of the humorous lady who had been born in Barrie's brain. It was the theme of all the critics next day. "Miss Jaffrey," said one of them, "smiled with her soul. She not only played the part of Barrie's

The Return of Adrian Mallard might be the title of the Next and Concluding Instalment of this novel. Rose Jaffrey, heart-broken by the death of her "dear egoist" as she calls her lover, is tempted to believe by Emery Jago that Mallard is sending her messages from the other world. Those words conveyed by slate-writing and other means are very startling, and—towards the end—demand something of Rose Jaffrey from which her whole nature shrinks.

The character of Jago is now revealed with ruthless strength in its strange mingling of self-deception and fanatical sincerity. The man becomes almost terrifying in his conviction of direct intercourse with the spirit of Mallard.

Scene after scene proceeds with a steadily moving intensity which rises to a great height of human drama in the concluding chapters of this novel, which has a tremendous surprise in the last line of all.

beautiful character, she lived in it . . . We have few such actresses."

In the dressing-room after her many calls before the curtain her father flung his arms about her, and kissed her on both cheeks, while Boyd and young Neal stood waiting with congratulations.

"Exquisite and perfect!" said Mr. Jaffrey. "Rose, my darling, I knew you could act, but not like that, not like that! You're a great artist. I'm very proud of you. You made your poor old father blubber like a baby. Didn't she, professor?"

"I didn't notice," said Boyd. "I was too busy blubbering myself. Miss Jaffrey, you've cured me of cynicism. I'm a wallowing sentimental, thanks to you and Barrie."

"I was playing to my friends," said Rose tremulously. "Their love helped me."

"It was perfectly topping," said Neal. "Absolutely divine, if you'll allow me to say so."

He allowed him to say so, laughing at his way of putting it, before the producer and others came in with a tiny figure with the smallest hands and feet on any full-grown man, and a large-sized head for his little body. He had his hands in his pockets and whistled to hide his incurable shyness.

"It was g-r-r-and, lassie," he said. "Just as I imagined the wean."

Many letters and telegrams were waiting for her in the theater next day when she passed through the stage door, and she read them in her dressing-room. They were congratulations from unknown admirers and many friends thanking her for the delight she had given them, and for some message that had come from her by her sweetness and grace. "The world is better for your beauty," wrote a famous old dramatist. "My dim old eyes were brightened by your loveliness and I repented of my sins and thanked God for your grace."

Rose Jaffrey had wet eyelashes when she read some of these words. She had been so near to calamity! If she had not been helped like that by some spiritual aid—surely her cry had been heard!—she would have been ruined for ever as an actress. How disappointed all these friends would have been! What a death-blow to her father's pride! She had been saved by that cry to her lover, beyond any doubt.

She opened another of those letters. But this time she sat staring at it as though its words had frightened her. It was not a letter of congratulation but a message from Emery Jago.

Dear Miss Jaffrey (he wrote), I think I ought to tell you that Mr. Mallard has come back. Several times his spirit has spoken through me. He keeps asking for you. If you care to attend one of my séances I feel sure you would be much interested. He has also spoken through Mrs. Laveray who is a medium in Camberwell.

Sincerely yours,
Emery Jago

Rose Jaffrey hid the letter under some flowers on her dressing-table before answering her call for the first act. One of the actors noticed that her hands were very cold when she touched his, but she played her part with the same charm.

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A few months ago, as a means of winning a million new users for Kotex, so as to expedite nation-wide distribution of the new Improved Kotex, we made a special offer of one box of Kotex free with every two boxes purchased for 98c. This sale is now ended.

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These two exclusive new features have doubled Kotex sales:

1 A new, form-fitting shape—non-detectable under the most clinging gowns, because corners are scientifically rounded and tapered to fit.

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& ALL THE FEATURES AND PROTECTION YOU HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN IN KOTEX ARE RETAINED.

SELDOM is a manufacturer able to present a greatly improved product at a striking reduction in price. Only doubled manufacturing facilities make such a step possible.

Improved Kotex has been two years in the making; two years of research, of test, of investigation and experiment in our laboratories, and in the laboratories of women doctors.

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And, at the new price, you obtain a product exclusive in design—the most radical development in intimate feminine hygiene since the invention of Kotex itself.

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Molting Pelican (Continued from page 83)

him a sponge. Say, the joke's on us. Will you take five dollars?"

"Dear me!" said an amiable voice. It was the Reverend Xanthus Merrifield with his hair glossy from treatment. "If I had my pharmaceutical kit I could stop that bleeding."

"I can stop it," said the uncle, "if he'll just leave me do it." He approached with a box of white powder.

"Give me that," said Leonard.

"Oh, all right. Suit yourself." And the uncle appealed to his recent patron. "I offered him five dollars."

"Yes, but it shouldn't have happened. I wish I could be of use, sir. I feel guilty. But you seem skilful. Am I addressing Doctor Leonard? Ah, we are all expecting you. My wife will be very glad to see you. I trust those gashes will be soon healed. Well, I mustn't keep David waiting any longer. I shall expect to tell you much about poor David."

"David? Oh, that Indian! I thought his name—"

"Ah, has Hugh begun with his jokes already? There's no real evil in that joyous nature—but the boy is always having his fun. You see, David is the last one of his band. The soldiers brought him in alive. His native name was unpronounceable, and when they translated it—well, no gentleman, let alone a lady, could possibly make use of it."

"He was at first most reluctant to receive baptism, but our religion is already making him tractable and gentle, and David seemed a fitting name since he is descended direct from Abraham. I shall have much to tell you of this. The Papagos have just sent me a stone. There is Hugh, ready for you. Ah, Hugh! always poking your fun. Good-by, doctor."

Hugh watched the clergyman spring actively into his saddle and amble away with the hapless Molting Pelican. Then he turned and caught sight of Leonard. "For the love of Mike!" he said.

"Yes, my face is a beauty spot."

"I offered him five dollars," said Charlie's uncle.

"It's not worth two bits," said Lloyd; and Leonard gazed with silent rancor at the looking-glass, while the boss explained that his nephew had to make a beginning like everybody else. Hugh extended his strong hand to the boy. "Cheer up, Charlie. You'll go far. If it had been my face, you'd have gone through the window already. Give the glad hand to life. Do you know why? It expands the chest. Your lungs will soon be playing around like Maltese kittens. The grocer's thermometer registers one hundred and fifteen in the shade."

"It was that at the railroad," said Leonard.

"Doctor, would you mind packing a couple of the ketchup in your pockets? The road is rough."

It needed care to distribute the bottles between various folds of blankets, some in front, some behind. There were a dozen.

"Three cents cheaper each bottle that way," Lloyd explained. "M'fawther wants me to learn economy. Why don't you take your coat off and sling it—no, I forgot the ketchup—lay it over the valise! Now we're off." And he took the reins.

"That man at the railroad," said Leonard, "told me it could be hotter."

"It can. But a case of sunstroke has never been heard of at the Post—and that's been here since the Territory was organized."

"Humidity always low, I suppose?"

"Dryness was created here. It's all that usually happens."

"Well, I feel as if a good deal had happened already."

Hugh looked at Leonard's raw scars. "Any man would. But that will never happen again, and you're going to miss it."

The long-tailed horses took them swiftly out of town to a road that wound among the cactus and the stony mounds of the desert.

"Do you know French?" said Hugh. "Do

you know the meaning of the word *ennui*?"

"I know the feel of it."

"You do not. Excuse my contradicting you on such short acquaintance."

Far away on many sides sharp mountains jutted up like icebergs.

"I should think it might be a hundred-and-something here," said Leonard.

Two dots grew visible ahead—two horsemen. One bobbed visibly.

"If that parson is a bore," said Leonard, "why don't they get rid of him?"

"They can't until his contract expires. This was a big Post when he came."

"Well, it's a small one now. Why isn't he moved to where he'll have a bigger congregation?"

"In the opinion of the Secretary of War," responded Hugh gravely, "the fewer persons that hear his sermons, the larger will be the attendance of our army at divine service."

They drove on in silence for a while.

"He's got three children," Hugh next observed. "Their names are Alpha, Epsilon, and Iota. The one they are expecting is to be Eta. It was his wife's idea, because they became engaged while she was studying Xenophon."

"What's he going to do when they've used up all the Greek vowels?"

"They have anticipated that, and they will then begin on the diphthongs. You see, a Greek vowel suits a boy or a girl equally well."

For the third time Leonard turned for a look at his new acquaintance, whose face, however, wore merely its accustomed seriousness. How much am I to believe of all this? wondered the surgeon. But I shall meet those children. Perhaps freaks grow bigger here than in Texas.

They were drawing nearer to the preacher and his passive victim.

"Absalom is hard at it," said Hugh.

"At what?"

"Restoring Molting Pelican's ancestral memory."

"Ancestral memory? What can he know about that?"

"Cast your eye on the books he buys. He met the Higher Education when his brain was still in short pants. If you give a baby lobster salad and whisky, what will the baby do? Absalom struck the very latest psychology when hymns and Longfellow's poems were his mental limit. So he goes and mixes ancestral memory and latent personality and the Lord knows what else with the Indians and the ten lost tribes, and along comes Molting Pelican for him to try it on."

"Well," said Leonard, "it's quite harmless compared with free silver or free love, or some of the other experiments they want to try."

They were now close to the riders, who separated for the buggy to pass; and the Reverend Xanthus Merrifield hailed them in triumph.

"David will tell you what he has mastered today." And he addressed a few words in Indian to the old Apache.

Obediently, Molting Pelican croaked some English words. "Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel."

"The text of my next sermon. First Numbers, part of the second verse. I always reward David when he does so well." And from his saddle-bag the Reverend Xanthus Merrifield drew a yellow banana, which Molting Pelican accepted without enthusiasm. The buggy drove on and the riders fell behind.

"More cranks per square mile in the U. S. A. than anywhere on earth," mused Leonard.

"Because more American brains jump into long pants before they should quit diapers. But in time you will envy Absalom."

"Do you believe that the climate will affect me as far as that?"

"You will. I do. You'll wish you had some absorbing hobby to fill this vacuum." Hugh swept his arm toward Arizona in general.

"But why does the Indian stand it? Why doesn't he run away? What keeps him?"

"He has nobody and nowhere to run to."

Last October met with him alive as he wants now and his I. doesn't want squaws and He'll die and He's quite supple and Pelican run to any "The sta

"Do you tire gay from M come!" O out, shone

"You k hear those throat—w own voice they've parson's al "Oh, no

"Yes, he's a Jew, he's projected to G parson."

"I earn Absalom."

"Say it. And here's English. history, he s language—W

Hugh enormous

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"You do tell you the vacuum, me yours, shocked, gious pare prize you of my inde grace in fr Another is eight, when birthday p From now grace."

"At the form at St acquaintances failed in all reached V I had att Cicero's Orv ard College less Greek, Holy Script for the 22 Education athletics?"

"Half-ba my letter s

"You ga vacuum, big enter month. W he came ga with my pa the first tim had said gr

"M'fawther his lumber character n thing just t "I don't

Last October most of his friends and relations met with sudden death when he was captured alive as being too harmless to shoot. All he wants now is to be sure of his three meals a day and his I. C. tent and his bed at night. He doesn't want to be sent to Florida with the squaws and children and those who surrendered. He'll do anything anybody says to escape that. He's quite tame, though he's still wonderfully supple and active for his years. Oh yes, Molting Pelican realizes there is nowhere for him to run to any more."

"The story is not entirely gay."

"Do you know many stories that are entirely gay if you choose the right angle to watch from? My gracious, but I'm glad you've come!" Once more the enchanting smile stole out, shone moment, and stole in again.

"You know," said Leonard presently, "to hear those English words escaping from that throat—well, he quacked them in the parson's own voice, just like this phonograph jigger they've invented lately. Uncanny. But the parson's all off in baptizing him."

"Oh, no."

"Yes, he is. When Molting Pelican discovers he's a Jew, he'll be furious at having been subjected to Gentile baptism. He might scalp the parson."

"I earnestly beg you will say that to Absalom."

"Say it yourself. I present you with it. And here's another thing. Why teach him English? If he's to recover his ancestral memory, he should start on his ancestral language—What's the matter now?"

Hugh Lloyd had uttered one sudden enormous laugh—his first.

"I'll tell you later. Dawn. There's dawn in me. I, too, may try an experiment. It needs meditation. I believe you have presented me with something. But how unfortunate that m'fawther removed me from the Higher Education!" One more irrepressible laugh burst from Hugh, followed instantly by seriousness. "Let us try to fill the vacuum that lies between here and my ranch. In 1862 I was born in San Francisco."

"I was born in Hyannis in 1859."

"You do not realize that I have begun to tell you the story of my life in order to fill a vacuum. If any vacuum is left, you shall tell me yours, but bear in mind that I am easily shocked. I am the son of wealthy but religious parents. A simple calculation will apprise you that I am now twenty-three. One of my indelible memories is m'fawther saying grace in front of our big silver soup tureen. Another is breakfast on the morning I was eight, when m'fawther said, 'Hugh, I have a birthday present that I know you will prize. From now on, you are to be allowed to say grace.'

"At the age of thirteen I entered the third form at St. Paul's School, where I made the acquaintance of Caesar's 'De Bello Gallico' and failed in all my examinations. By the time I reached Virgil's 'Eneid' in the fourth form, I had attained puberty and was ready for Cicero's Orations in the fifth. I entered Harvard College from the sixth with a little Latin, less Greek, and much careful instruction in the Holy Scriptures. I also held the school record for the 220-yard dash. Yes sir, the Higher Education and I have met. Did you go in for athletics?"

"Half-back at Harvard for three years. Got my letter sophomore year."

"Your games with Yale shall fill some of our vacuum. So I was in Cambridge while m'fawther was busy in San Francisco running his big enterprises. He paid my bills the first month. When he got them the second month—he came East. I ate my Thanksgiving dinner with my parents in San Francisco, and it was the first time since the summer vacation that I had said grace."

"M'fawther put me to work in the office of his lumber-mill and tannery. He said my character needed building. Did you hear something just then?"

"I don't think so."

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"Well, one night at the tannery I was busy building my character in charge of the superintendent, when he laid down three aces and stared at me strangely. There seemed to be a rumbling.

"I have heard that before," said the superintendent, and jumped out of the window three stories up.

"I followed him fearlessly. We both landed on a soft pile of bark, and watched the tannery rise into the air and come down in distant places. The superintendent explained that a boiler always gave you warning if you knew how to listen to it; but in my place, would you have felt anxious to become a tanner?

"But m' fawther said my character needed a great deal of building and I passed a month at his mines at Las Yedras before he transferred me to his ranch here. There was a timely vacancy. The superintendent had shot himself. I hope you don't mind my talking so much? The cattle have kept me at the ranch, and it is eight days since I have seen a soul except Mexicans. Have you ever wished you were a cow? At times I envy the cow. She does not depend on conversation for her happiness. Are you sure you didn't hear something?"

"Are you sure that tannery didn't get on your nerves?"

"I never used to be nervous. My character must have begun to build. I've more to tell you, but if you will talk for the next four miles, I shall feel very grateful, and less ashamed."

"Can I get a drink of water on the road?"

"In four miles we shall reach my well at the ranch."

"I should think it might boil in this weather. I was born at Hyannis in 1859. My aunts educated me. They were going to leave me their cranberry bog—"

"That's what it is!" shouted Hugh. "The ketchup. Look at your coat."

Both of them now heard it; a third bottle had gone; and as Leonard saw a thick red ooze coming out of one of his coat pockets, the other pocket was shaken by an explosion; at the same moment he felt a sensation of wetness in his ankles, and stooped hastily.

"Look out for broken glass," said Hugh, lashing the amazed horses.

"In spite of everything you say I feel as if we had no need to fill a vacuum," said Leonard, clutching the seat.

"If we can save one or two we'll cool them in the well. M' fawther wants me to practise economy. Can you count the living?"

"If I let go I'll be among the dead," said Leonard. "Didn't you say sunstroke never occurred here?"

They lowered three surviving bottles into the well, and after a quiet evening with soap and sponge they sought slumber, which Leonard found little of.

"Did you study Hebrew at Harvard?" inquired Hugh at breakfast.

Leonard snarled bitterly. "Yes, I know my face looks like a dead language."

Hugh sighed. "Well, something will occur to me I feel sure . . . With that sunburn of yours, I couldn't have shaved or put plaster on. It must hurt."

"I'll be all right in a day or so," said Leonard.

As they neared Fort Chiricahua the thin call of a trumpet sounded "Stables" across the empty air, betokening routine in the lifeless Post; and soon they met a lady slowly walking. She was Mrs. Wyckling, wife of the commanding officer, and she greeted the new doctor warmly. He was grateful for her tact in taking no notice of his appearance.

"And we are hoping," she said, "that you may possibly understand ice-machines, because ours has just gone through the roof of the shed, and we are expecting a visit from the Secretary of War."

"I suppose it is the ammonia. But I'm afraid I don't understand them at all."

"That Secretary," said Hugh, "has been expected since last fall."

"But when he does come," said the lady, "we mustn't be without ice."

"I hope he comes tomorrow, and all his

butter runs, and all his water is tepid, and his milk sour, and his meat smelling; then he'll get a taste of what his two-cent policy is making you people put up with."

"Thank you for your fierceness, Hugh. But we must entertain him properly." And laughing, the lady went on, just as another came up.

"Welcome to ouah desert home, doctah," said she. "Ah, I see you have been making a night of it with ouah Hugh."

"I—"

"No apologies, doctah! We Southe'n ladies just wouldn't think anything of a gentleman if he wasn't spirited. My husband will call at once." She departed in trills of girlish laughter.

Fury was in Leonard's eyes. "So that's what they'll all believe!"

"Absalom saw you and Charlie," Hugh reminded him.

"I suppose that cat's husband is spirited."

"Old Jonter's vacuum is filled by ten every morning."

"If that cat gets sick, I'll give her poison."

But he gave nobody anything for a while. This was settled by his face. The first day it rebelled against its treatment by Charlie's razor and the sun of Arizona. Dressings of ichthyol brought Leonard through alive, and Hugh found him in front of his mirror one morning.

"I'll report you as out of danger," said Hugh. "First time you've showed any interest in your personal beauty." He helped him back to bed.

"I know I was dotty," said the patient. "How long did it last?"

"You have filled a lot of vacuum for both of us," replied Hugh. "And you escaped last Sunday's sermon. You can have an egg today."

"What is today?"

"Wednesday."

"Why, you must be living here!" Leonard exclaimed suddenly.

"Right across the hall. By next week you'll be looking after yourself—but for me the vacuum has no more terrors at present."

Leonard was too languid to ask or to care what that meant. "A nice way for a doctor to begin his new job," he muttered feebly. But after the particular fever which had devastated Leonard, even such a celebrated half-back as he does not generally spring to full strength in the twinkling of an eye; and day after day, as he felt his energy trickling back into his body, he perceived also the invading vacuum.

"What's today?" he would ask Hugh each morning. And Hugh would tell him.

"Anything happened?"

"Nothing."

"Anything going to?"

"Nothing."

"News of any ice-machine?"

"No."

"Any secretary?"

"No."

"What's the thermometer?"

"A hundred and twenty."

Into their silence would fall the thin note of the trumpet, sounding some call of routine. Sometimes the questions and answers varied slightly.

"What's today?"

"Monday."

"Did he preach about those ten lost tribes?"

"Ran 'em in for twenty minutes."

"Enjoy a nice nap?"

"Yes."

"And the ice-machine?"

"Promised early next month."

"And the secretary?"

"No news."

"And the thermometer?"

"A hundred and twenty-two."

"Anything else?"

"Potted ham blown up."

"Who did that?"

"Thermometer at commissary store. Other canned goods followed ham. Olives reported as holding on. Do you feel strong enough to resume the story of your life where the ketchup broke it off at your aunts?"

"I'll skip them."

"Don't skip a single aunt; waste nothing."

I'll listen to you if you listen to me, and we'll fill the vacuum."

Visitors filled it, too, when Leonard began to sit up. The Post called. Captain Jonter came in a spirited condition and suggested cards. His wife gossiped to the patient about people of whom he had never heard. There was some dear Lilly just engaged to some dear Harry at some other Post; a wife ten years older than he was just what he needed to keep him straight.

I will certainly poison her, thought Leonard.

The Reverend Xanthus Merrifew brought books on psychology and about the lost tribes. Honora, his wife, brought Alpha and Epsilon to cheer the patient. Iota was too young.

So Hugh, thought Leonard, is not a total liar. Leonard had often heard the children's voices out of his window, generally in obvious disagreement. Both could talk fluently, but both sat dumb now, and Alpha glared at Epsilon, whose hair Honora stroked while she entertained Leonard with a stream of talk.

Suddenly Alpha broke out: "Mother, can a lady lay an egg?"

"Can't she, Mother?" screamed Epsilon.

"Hush, darlings, never interrupt Mother. As I was saying, doctor, Xanthus is making wonderful progress with poor David. It is all so wonderful. Xanthus says that by Thanksgiving David will be able to stand up before us all and tell the wonderful story in good English. How his Hebrew forefathers got up into China and how at last after many centuries they wandered across the Aleutian isthmus to America, long before it was discovered by Columbus. Run downstairs, darlings, and play with pussy."

I pity that cat, thought Leonard.

"As I was saying, doctor, Xanthus would have brought you the Papago stone this morning, but he went to the barber's."

Wails of controversy out on the parade-ground took this mother away.

Freaks? thought Leonard. "It is all so wonderful," he said aloud, as he sat by his window. He was saying it again, imitating the lady's singsong, as Hugh entered, followed by Molting Pelican.

"Why, you're alone!" said Hugh. "Were you not talking?"

"Freaks," replied Leonard. And Hugh took the Indian across the hall.

Leonard was out in time for the next sermon. This was about the Papago stone. It was held out for all to see. "Another proof of the Mosaic tradition," the preacher was saying, as Leonard came out of a doze. "What does its rude carving tell us? You see it is a feathered serpent. What is that? Quetzalcoatl. And what is Quetzalcoatl but the serpent which Moses lifted up?"

At this point, Leonard swooned to sleep again. A rustling restored him to consciousness. All heads were turned where Absalom was pointing to a corner at the back.

"Lo, the poor Indian. The time is not far distant when our Old Chief will tell us the wonderful story of his Hebrew ancestors." And there sat Molting Pelican in his corner, blinking.

"I've got used to you," said Leonard to Hugh. "Why sleep at your ranch?"

"As often as I can," said Hugh, "we'll fill the vacuum together."

So he kept some clothes in the room across the hall; and Absalom preached about the Pittsfield strap, and the Newark slab, and Padre Garcia's book, while they dozed in their seats and Molting Pelican blinked in his back corner, Sunday after Sunday.

The confidential pair did not abandon their ritual of greeting, they merely modified it variously, as, for example:

"What's today?"

"Any day you say."

"What is our Old Chief saying?"

"It is all so wonderful."

Over such exchanges the pair betrayed no smile. The new ice-machine came; the thermometer began to go down; the potted ham ceased to blow up; the flag rose on its pole each



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morning and was lowered each evening; and across the successive hours the thin calls of the trumpet sang the repetitions of routine.

Some mysterious routine had been keeping Hugh busy with Molting Pelican for several weeks. When Hugh rode out to his ranch the Indian often went with him.

"Wish you were back in civil life?" asked Hugh as they sat together one evening.

"Not any longer," Leonard answered, staring at Hugh.

"Going to stick to the army?"

"I am."

"Got any more Texas experiences to tell?" Leonard shook his head.

"If you keep on looking at me like that," said Hugh, "I shall cry."

"What outrage are you at across the hall, anyhow?" demanded Leonard.

Hugh rose. His solemnity deepened. "Homme, it was you that sowed the seed," he said. "Don't you think that wretched Indian has enough trouble without you?"

"I have felt obliged to step in," said Hugh. "And he prefers me to Absalom."

"Well, step in when I'm out and can't hear your abominable noises."

Hugh's eyes gleamed. "David is happy," said he, in the chaplain's innocent and eager voice, "and I am happy, for I too have now a hobby. Do you object to gambling?"

"I should love to trust you," continued Hugh, with earnest sorrow. "But m' fawther always says not to tell your secrets even to your dearest friend. Don't put your money on Absalom. Bet on me. When the time comes for our Old Chief to tell us the wonderful story of his Hebrew ancestors—" The bass voice trembled here, and then one of Hugh's great laughs prevailed over his gravity for a moment; he recovered and continued, "I have assumed a daring hypothesis, and it is now time to go to bed."

It was not many nights later that Leonard, having fallen asleep early, was wakened. Hugh was sitting on the bed. Leonard was very cross.

"It is only nine o'clock," said Hugh. "I cannot share my secret with you, but this I can." He struck a match and lighted the lamp. "What's that thing?" asked Leonard, still very cross.

"We will now fill some vacuum together." And Hugh began to peel the tin-foil off what he was holding.

"What is it?" repeated Leonard.

"Cannabis indica."

"Hashish? How did you get it?"

"I wrote a friend to procure it in DuPont Street, San Francisco."

"Then you've taken it before?"

"Never. The idea just came to me in a flash. Variety! Don't you crave it?"

Leonard sat up. "For the fluid extract the dose is fifteen minimis, one for the essence, and half a grain for the extract. But how strong is this gum?"

"You chew it," said Hugh. "It causes delicious visions in Chinatown."

"Orientals are different. I believe it's never fatal. Its effect varies with individuals. Sometimes a preparation does not act at all."

"Will you begin?" said Hugh.

"Why not?" said Leonard. "Variety, after all." He nibbled a very little. "Sweet. Sort of paste. They must have mixed fruit with it." And he handed it to Hugh.

"Yes," said Hugh. "Sort of sweet. It must take a lot of this to make a grain."

"Look out," said Leonard. "We don't know. But I'll take care of you."

Together they sat on the bed, waiting.

"Feel anything?"

"No. You?"

"No. Wonder how long it takes."

Again they sat awhile.

"Do you suppose they eat a whole package?" inquired Hugh.

"I'm not going to eat half a one," said Leonard. And they waited.

"Have another nibble?" said Hugh. Each took one; and they sat.

"This is very slow," said Hugh. "It's ten o'clock." And he took a larger nibble.

"Better go easy," said Leonard. He took a small one. And they waited.

After a silence Hugh rose. "No visions yet," said he, and bit off a little more.

"If you try that again," said Leonard, starting up—"please don't, Hugh."

"All right, doc." And they waited.

"I guess it's old," said Hugh. "I guess it's stale. Let's go to bed." And they went, leaving their doors open.

Nobody knows what hour it was when Hugh was roused and heard sobbing across the hall. Was this the first vision? He went over to see. Leonard lay awake, repeating over and over, "How wicked I have been. Oh!" Then he saw Hugh standing over him, quoting the Bible in his deepest bass.

"And Absalom," Hugh was saying, "weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. Second Samuel, fourteenth chapter, twenty-sixth verse." Then Hugh sat down on the bed.

"Oh, how wicked I have been," sobbed Leonard. "Take him off me!" Heived under his bed and came up on the other side. "Inexcusable hair," said Hugh. "And the Old Chief says he was Pharaoh's pawnbroker. Don't be a squirrel."

"Oh, how wicked I have been," said Leonard; and he went round his bed again.

It wasn't stale, thought Hugh. What will happen to me? I took twice as much as he did.

It happened at once. Something in Hugh's head seemed to go Bing! and he immediately took to pursuing Leonard round and round the bed. Into this activity a sane moment would drop, when they would stop and wring each other's hands, saying, "Too bad, old man!" and resume circling round the bed. Or was it a vision, and did they in reality only go round once? Nobody knows. If I can get to the bathroom for a drink of water, thought Hugh. He looked and saw the bathroom, infinitely distant.

"Why do you sleep in a telescope?" he said to Leonard, who now sat quietly looking on.

"It didn't use to be," said Leonard mournfully. "Don't let him scalp him."

Hugh shook his head. "Harmless. Merely pawnbroker's ancestral memory. Why do you speak so slow?"

"That's what you're doing," said Leonard. "Oh, how wicked I have been."

"I'll never get to the bathroom," said Hugh. "I don't see why you like a telescope."

"Do you think you could get as far as the mantelpiece?" suggested Leonard. And he watched Hugh reach the mantelpiece. "Don't be so slow at it," he said. "There. Now you're part-way to the bathroom."

"But it has taken me fifty years," Hugh said. "I'll not live long enough to make the bathroom, and I'm so thirsty."

"But it is wicked not to excuse his hair," said Leonard anxiously.

"The Old Chief says, 'Nize gentleman, mind your beeziness'; that's what the Old Chief says. I am dreadfully thirsty."

He took a bottle from the mantelpiece and began swallowing it, and instantly foamed at the mouth. They both saw the foam pouring out in ribbons, long coils of fluttering ribbons.

"I'm a conjurer!" cried Hugh, and lay down on the floor, and the ribbons ran over it.

This sight acted as an antidote to Leonard's dose of Cannabis indica; he came out of his visions.

"That's ipecac!" he exclaimed, returning to full responsibility; and he rushed to his medicines; and not knowing any too well what to do, he did a thing that did no harm, though it was painful. He gave Hugh a twenty-minim injection of brandy.

"Do you remember what we did?" said Hugh the next day. "And what we said?"

"Perfectly. I don't know why I thought I was wicked. I am rather good, compared to you."

"Yes. But if the bathroom looked three hundred miles off to me, think what your

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New England conscience must have been doing!"

"Now and then," said Leonard, "you show dawning powers of reason."

"Now and then," said Hugh, "I believe that you were young once. And Mrs. Jonter will tell the Post that we have been making another night of it."

"She would be quite right—but I shall not mention the incident."

"Don't mention anything I happened to say, either. And don't put your money on Absalom."

"What are you at, anyway?"

"I have set our Thanksgiving entertainment," Hugh answered, again resorting to his oratorical bass, "as the moment for announcing my discovery to the scientific world. On that night the Secretary of War is to pay us his long-expected visit; and as the program of song and recitation seemed to me a little frivolous to offer a member of the President's Cabinet, I shall introduce a note of seriousness directly following the story of the ten lost tribes, with which Absalom is to conclude the formal exercises."

"Keep your secret!" growled Leonard.

"We suspect what you and Hugh are plotting," said Mrs. Wyckling to him later.

"Then I wish you'd tell me," said the surgeon. "He won't."

"Oh, Doctor Leonard! How discreet your profession is!"

"But I mean it!"

"Well, never mind the curiosity of a poor frontier Post with only gossip to fill its time."

"David has become so devoted to Hugh," said the Reverend Xanthus Merrifew to Major Wyckling. "He is more contented than ever."

"What does a lively boy like that," said the major, "find in an old scarecrow like that?"

"I trust," said Mrs. Jonter earnestly to Leonard, "that you will not allow Hugh to teach David the use of drugs."

So the cat knows about the hashish, thought Leonard.

But their minds were turned to hospitality by the approach of the Secretary of War. For him they would do their best, and he would do his best for them when he was back in Washington. Out of their slender purses they bought delicacies for him to eat; for his drink they brought good bottles from San Francisco.

When he arrived from Soto de Rey with his escort the first night they could not serenade him according to military etiquette, because two trumpets, one fife and a drum will execute but little music fit for a Secretary. He expressed relief. He had listened to a string of serenades in this tour of inspection.

He praised the mountains, praised the desert as the grandest he had seen, praised the drill, the hospital, the discipline, and also the bed in the Wycklings' spare room. No food anywhere had equaled what Chiricahua gave him.

"He'll give us anything we ask for," said Mrs. Wyckling to the major.

Molting Pelican had a busy Thanksgiving day.

"David is inclined to be nervous this morning," said the chaplain on meeting Leonard on the parade-ground. "And how natural that is! But I know that he will acquit himself well before the Secretary tonight." And the chaplain retired with Charlie's uncle, the barber, who had brought his implements to the Post because at such a crisis the chaplain could not go to Soto de Rey for the usual treatment.

Leonard, sitting alone that afternoon in his quarters, heard the gentle, unmistakable step and the well-known gentle knock across his hall. He opened his door on Molting Pelican.

"How," said the Indian. He was stately in his tribal dress, in *gala* for the occasion.

"Hugh will come soon," said Leonard. "Here is a chair for you."

The Indian took it. The silence embarrassed the white man.

"Hugh is your good friend," said Leonard.

The Apache's eyes grew warm. "Good friend," he repeated.

"My good friend, too," said Leonard, pointing to himself.

The Indian rose and shook Leonard's hand.

"I know," he said.

"Mr. Merrifew heap good man," suggested Leonard.

Molting Pelican's eyes searched him. Was it a twinkle he saw deep in them? Leonard wondered.

"A heap good man," Leonard insisted.

"Heap good man," assented Molting Pelican, as Hugh came in.

"Spying?" said he. "You'll get no tales out of school."

"Don't I know it!" exclaimed Leonard.

All the while Molting Pelican stood looking from one friend to the other.

"Don't you bet on Absalom," said Hugh.

And the door across the hall closed upon them and their secret. After their dress rehearsal was over, the Apache went out, and Hugh stood on Leonard's threshold.

"The Old Chief wanted to beg off, at first," said he, "like any young lady at a seminary. He feels better now. He knows I'll be there to prompt him." The shy smile came, shone out, and went. "He thinks," continued Hugh, "that I have become his father and his mother and all his nearest relations."

The Secretary of War applauded Honora, who played the melodeon at the entertainment and sang "Sweet and Low," "Clochette," and "Nancy Lee." He applauded Mrs. Jonter, who recited an unpublished poem by a Southern lady from Atlanta. He applauded the minstrel show given by some enlisted men.

"You will have to put up with what is coming now," Mrs. Wyckling whispered to him, as the Reverend Xanthus Merrifew mounted upon the stage with Molting Pelican. "But Hugh Lloyd is preparing something for the end, and his mind is very ingenious."

It was not hard to put up with, this next number on the program, because they had never seen anything like it in the whole course of their experience. They had heard of the theory of the ten lost tribes of Israel here and there, but none had witnessed a demonstration of it offered in this manner. They stared at the rapt expression of the chaplain, at his flowing locks, as he proclaimed his fixed idea; they stared with amazed eyes, as Molting Pelican in obedience to his motion opened his mouth and began.

Forgetting all laughter, they listened in a hushed concentration to the painfully memorized sentences pronounced to them. They heard Spanish, texts from the Bible, scraps from the Apocrypha, sentences from lay historians; and then in conclusion, they heard that the speaker's name was David, because he was descended from Abraham.

When it was done, still their hush held, and there was Hugh beside Molting Pelican.

"Mr. Secretary," said he, and Leonard had never seen him more solemn, or heard his voice so deep, "and ladies and gentlemen: The Old Chief has told you in his simple and affecting way how he has recovered his ancestral memory by the help of the recent discoveries in psychology. But he has told you only in part. What remains is the outcome of a daring hypothesis that he traces his lineage back to the days of the captivity in Egypt."

"His forefathers in those times were wont to accommodate the needy sons of the Pharaohs with trifling sums, on the deposit of sufficient collateral, such as royal trinkets and other valuables, redeemable by tickets upon repayment of the loan. This ancient practise of his people will now be illustrated by the Old Chief."

"Hugh is always poking his fun," interjected the Reverend Xanthus Merrifew.

And then, with the characteristic gesture, accent and idioms of many recent New York citizens of that day, Molting Pelican addressed Absalom in these words:

"Nize gentleman, what you want for that nize hair? I gif you ten dollars."

He took hold of the hair and stroked it and was going on with his speech, when Absalom in alarm most inexplicably jerked away.

Screams rose from the ladies, other sounds

from the men. Absalom stood before them, bald as an egg, and a primal yell of terror rent the air and shattered the hearing. Molted Pelican stood by Absalom, petrified, glaring at what he held. It dropped from his hand.

"It ain't his natural hair!" roared Charlie's uncle, rising. "I can fix it right away."

At this offer of first aid to the scalped, the company sank into hysterics. When they next remembered anything, the stage was empty. Molted Pelican had vanished. Out of a side door were seen departing the backs of Honora and Absalom, over whose skull the over-excited uncle of Charlie was trying to spread the desecrated wig like an umbrella. A very sober Hugh was descending from the stage.

"So that was your daring hypothesis," said Leonard to Hugh, when the Secretary had wrung Hugh's hand and implored him to come and stay with him in Washington; and everybody had chattered their say and supped their fill; and the two were undressing for bed.

"No," said Hugh quietly, "I didn't mean that. I never suspected that. I never dreamed of such a thing."

"Molted Pelican didn't dream of it either."

"I didn't think of his leaving," muttered Hugh. "I didn't see him go."

"Well, he has nowhere to run to any more."

"Yes. That is what I am thinking about."

"Oh, he'll turn up," said Leonard easily. "Let's get some sleep."

But ease was not in the mind of Hugh, that night or in the morning. Dressed and dusty, he entered the room and waked Leonard.

"I should have followed him last night," he said. "He is not in his tent. He didn't go there. Nobody has seen him."

"I wouldn't take it so hard," said Leonard. "He is a very old man," said Hugh.

"Oh, he'll find out about it. It's all over the country by now. He'll come back when he hears what it was."

"How did I ever happen not to guess what it was?" demanded Hugh. "Have you often met a man of thirty without a hair on his head?"

It sent Leonard into the giggles between his sheets.

But the self-accusing anxiety of Hugh did not brighten. "Well, get up," he said, "and we'll have breakfast."

"I'll help you look for him, if you say so," said Leonard at breakfast.

"Come along," said Hugh.

The pair started on their horses.

"If you don't find the poor old relic today," said Major Wyckling, "I'll turn out the Post on his trail tomorrow."

But there was no trail on that hard ground. The mountains with their rocks and canyons offered countless chances of concealment; and the hours went by, and the November sun moved low in the southwest.

"He would be afraid to make a fire," said Hugh.

"Would one evah have expected," said Mrs. Jonter, down at the Post, "that Hugh would take any thought about it?"

"Hugh doesn't show that side to everybody," said Mrs. Wyckling.

"Good fellow!" said Captain Jonter. "Hope they find him."

"I hope he'll visit me in Washington," said the Secretary of War. "Tell him so. He's a boor in a dull world." And the official with his escort departed to resume his tour of the Southwest. In the same train with him departed the Reverend Xanthus Merrifew, with Honora, Alpha, Epsilon, and Iota.

"Well," said Mrs. Jonter, "I hope Hugh will be satisfied with his joke! To drive that nother away in her delicate state!"

"I'm satisfied," declared Major Wyckling. "I guess—what's the next one's name?—Eta will be born at El Paso."

After dark, two dusty horsemen rode into the Post and reported failure.

"I don't see how he had strength to go farther than we have been," said Hugh.

"I'll send E troop out tomorrow," said Major Wyckling.

"Could he possibly have taken to the open?"



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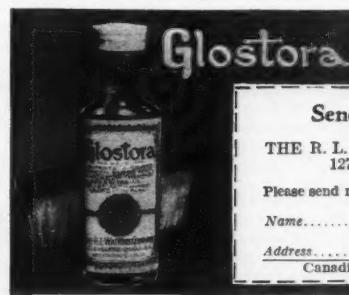
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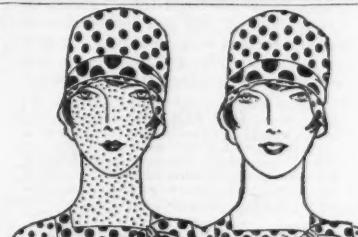
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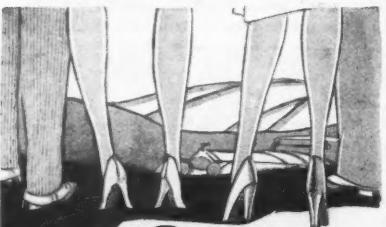
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said Hugh next day to Leonard. "We'll try it."

The two rode out into the desert. After many hours, silent and hungry, they turned for supper towards Hugh's ranch.

"But after all," said Leonard, "who is going to feel that you are to blame?"

"I don't care what they feel," said Hugh moodily. His eyes watched the ground for footprints. In time the ranch lay before them.

"Who is that sitting on your porch?" said Leonard.

Hugh looked up from the ground. In a moment he was galloping forward. Leonard contented himself with following at a brisk trot. He saw the figure of Molting Pelican rise at Hugh's approach and stand with arms spread in a gesture of surrender and appeal. He saw Hugh spring to the ground and grasp both hands of the lonely Apache. As he came up to the porch a conversation in the Indian's language was ending.

"The Old Chief says," began Hugh, and stopped, for his voice had trembled—but not with mirth—"he says he had no one to run to but me."

"How," said Molting Pelican to Leonard.

"And so that," said Hugh, regaining his customary tones, "is what you get for trying to be funny."

"Well, you got Absalom out of his job," said Leonard. At this Hugh gave one of his enormous laughs. "And you got an invitation from the Secretary of War."

"I hope m' fawther will let me accept."

When the Secretary of War in Washington received the petition for a second ambulance and other improvements, he was greatly astonished and refused it promptly. "Never at any frontier Post that I have inspected," said he, "have I been so well entertained. They've nothing to complain of." But when the thermometer had risen high again, the order came to abandon Fort Chincahua. Its usefulness was over.

The officers were starting for their new station in Montana in advance of the troops by a few days. Hugh with Molting Pelican was on the sultry platform to see his friends off.

"Be good to yourself," he said to Leonard.

"It's you that need to be good. Try to be more like me when I'm gone."

"M' fawther writes that in another six months," said Hugh, "he'll come here to see if my character is sufficiently built to justify his removing me to a more responsible job."

"It'll look like six years to you if you try any more hashish."

"It's only in your company that I have been tempted to take drugs."

"All aboard!" said the conductor.

Leonard jumped up on the rear platform and stood there; Hugh with the Indian stood by the steps. The train crept into motion.

"Next time you need a shave," said Hugh, "don't hire a bootblack."

"Wait till it's cooler," called Leonard, "before you travel with ketchup."

"If you get erysipelas again, send for me."

"What does the Old Chief say?" shouted Leonard.

"It's all so wonderful!" yelled Hugh.

The train was now getting away. Leonard began waving his hat.

"Heep good man," said Molting Pelican.

"Heep good," assented Hugh.

They watched the waving hat. The distance widened. Suddenly the cars floated on quicksilver; the cars dissolved; only the waving was left, a motion without form, which was gone the next instant. The wide smoke-stack blurred and vanished. A tall column of smoke floated upward staining the glassy infinity.

"Let's go, Pelican," said Hugh. "Nobody is left to fill the vacuum but you and me."

They jumped on their horses and rode slowly into the burning desert. Inside the station of Soto de Rey, the fan of the agent moved ceaselessly back and forth.

A Chevalier of the Cumberland

(Continued from page 75)

militia company and addressed the citizen soldiery, congratulating the men upon having for their commander so valiant an officer as Major-General Jackson. A race was arranged at Clover Bottom that the colonel might note the superior mettle of Tennessee-bred horses.

He was impressed by the many evidences of Jackson's popularity; here was an ally worth enlisting for any enterprise that required intelligence and daring.

The apple toddies at the Hermitage were a stimulating potion and helped the colonel to forget the hatreds he had left behind him. He had not expected to linger so long on the Cumberland but it was a relief to be domiciled in so pleasant a home, where he even enjoyed the luxury of a body-servant, detailed by the host to look after his needs. And the mistress of the Hermitage was a very pretty woman, with the vivacity he admired in women and a gracious, attentive, unfailingly thoughtful hostess.

The devotion of the Jacksons to each other was something new in his observation of married life. One might have thought them young lovers! The constant evidences of their affection touched even his cynical soul. No chance here for one of the flirtations in which he was adept! This gentle little woman with her heart of laughter looked at him sometimes in a way most disturbing to his conceit. It might be that reports of his numerous affairs with women had penetrated even to the Cumberland wilderness.

He was uncomfortable when he remembered Lady Melderode and wished that he had forbidden her to follow him to Nashville. Men might be tolerant of such relationships, but he preferred that the dark eyes of his hostess should not rest upon that fascinating feather-head he was carrying along to relieve the tedium of his journey.

A part of every day the guest reserved for himself, studying papers and maps, throwing

off many letters at Jackson's writing-table. Or he would retire to a strip of woodland that had caught his fancy and Rachel would see him there, pacing back and forth in rapt meditation. What was the man thinking about? she wondered. She was used to her husband's straightforward speech; he always said what he meant in a manner that left no question as to his meaning, but the colonel, touching many subjects, was never very clear as to just why he was sailing western waters with his huge portfolio of maps. He might establish a colony somewhere in the southwest; but even this he never mentioned as a concrete plan.

He was busy with his papers one morning when Rachel accompanied her husband to inspect a new sheepfold, built to accommodate the spring's increase of the flock.

"You don't like Colonel Burr," remarked Jackson abruptly.

"If he's your friend that doesn't matter," Rachel replied.

"But why don't you like him? He's a gentleman; you can't complain of his manners. He's certainly an interesting talker."

"Don't worry, my dear, if I can't believe in him. I never question your judgment about anything. It was perfectly right for you to bring him to our home. But forgive me for saying it, he's not a man I'd trust. He's asking a great number of questions about the militia, and how many volunteers could be raised if we got into war; but somehow it seems to me he's keeping back something."

"Maybe he is, but it's natural for a man who's been in public life to ask such questions. First thing we know we'll be at war with Spain and caught napping. We ought to thank God somebody from the other side of the mountains sees the danger as he does."

"Then I am mistaken about him, my dearest!" she said with a laugh. "So we needn't say more about it."

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"I'm bothered whenever you don't agree with me," he said with a broad smile. "I'm always afraid you may be right!" He reached over the fence, picked up a lamb and put it into her arms. "That's a sign of peace between us!" he said and they returned to the house.

A case called unexpectedly for trial required Jackson's presence in town the next day. The colonel declined an invitation to accompany him, as there were more letters to be written and sent east by the first boat he encountered when he resumed his journey.

Jackson had finished his business before the court when the bailiff informed him that a lady was waiting to see him in his law office.

"What lady?" Jackson demanded, impatient to return to the Hermitage. The bailiff knew nothing except that a boy from the tavern had brought the message.

As he rarely had a woman client Jackson assumed that it was probably one of his sisters-in-law with a message for Rachel. He hurried down the street to the office, opened the door and was greeted at once by the cheery voice of a lady who had established herself comfortably by his table and was perusing a law book.

"My dear senator, judge, General—or whatever you are called now! You see I have made good my threat; I have arrived on the Cumberland! Is it possible you do not remember me? Or worse, that you are not pleased?"

"Lady Melderode!"

He made no attempt to conceal his astonishment. She put out her hand, smiling indulgently at his consternation.

"One might think you are not elated to see me! But did I not tell you that I should one day visit your wilderness? Was I not to see savage princesses and have the honor of meeting your wife? Here I am, sir, as I might say, depositing myself on your very door-step!"

Jackson's mind worked rapidly. He had never dreamed that Fowler's wife would invade the wilderness and the Devil himself could not have been less welcome. He had seen Fowler's horse hitched at the public rack in front of the court-house and it was wholly conceivable that his friend might at any moment appear at the office. He had left the door open, for the day was unseasonably warm, and he was now afraid to close it, knowing that he was face to face with a very clever woman who might suspect that he had a reason. A distasteful situation, but one requiring careful handling.

The woman had changed little in the few years that had elapsed since he had seen her last in Philadelphia. She was in no sense an object of pity. Her audacity, with its tinge of well-bred insolence, still served her well. An amused smile played about her lips as he remained standing, hat in hand, debating what to do with her.

"Won't you have a seat?" she asked mischievously. "Am I interfering with business? You look at me as if I were some strange animal that had wandered in from the forest."

There was no resentment in her tone; she was merely enjoying his very manifest discomfiture, which she interpreted as an evidence of masculine impatience at having the usual routine of his affairs interrupted.

He sat down between her and the door, and affected an ease he did not feel. Given as he was to the quick utterance of his thoughts, he was hard put to conceal them while he sought some way of protecting Fowler from discovery. He cursed the hour in which he had allowed Norton to introduce him to the woman.

Even if the only guest-room the Hermitage afforded had not been occupied, it was a question whether Rachel with all her generosity would have received her. And this being true he could hardly ask Mrs. Donelson or Mrs. Hays to entertain her. He had never in his life been rude to a woman of any degree, but here was a plight before which his instinctive chivalry was helpless. But Lady Melderode was wholly serene.

"I arrived only an hour ago in my little boat. The river trip has been very charming.

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I am entirely willing to send you my Eyelash and Eyebrow Grower C.O.D. If I do that I charge you \$1.95 for the Grower, and you pay also the few cents postage. But if you will send \$1.95 with your order, I will pay postage. You choose whatever way you want. But I suggest—merely suggest—that it is to your advantage to send cash with order. You not only save the postage, but it is more convenient. You see if you order C.O.D. and are not home when package is delivered, the postman will leave it with someone else, and then you have to go to the post office for the package. You can avoid all trouble by sending \$1.95 with your order.

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It required full five years of research in my scientific laboratory before I found the secret. I had discovered by accident that a certain oil which would readily stimulate eyelash and eyebrow growth. Mildly, I say; for results were not pronounced enough. But that was my cue. I followed through, continuing experiments. I made endless combinations of ingredients. And at last I succeeded—beyond my utmost hope. No one before has known the secret. I doubt if anyone else will have the secret. I did not know. And of course I guard my discovery with every resource at my command. My grower is entirely harmless. By no chance can it injure the eyes. Don't forget that. It is everlastingly safe—and nothing you'd not want.

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Take me at my word; which is that no matter how scant the eyelashes and eyebrows, I will increase their length and thickness in 30 days—or not accept a single penny. There are no strings attached to my guarantee, or to my claim of New growth, or no pay. You are the sole judge. And money will be returned the very day it may be requested. So if you just reason, think things out, consider my reputation as the world's leading beauty specialist for fifteen years, you will not hesitate. You will let me prove what I can do.

He was annoyed that she seemed to surmise his discomfiture at seeing her and was laughing at him just as on the occasion when he met her at the Philadelphia jeweler's and she had made it necessary for him to offer his escort for the inauguration. He had been a fool ever to yield to her cajoleries; she was a mischief-maker, a dangerous person. There came back to him Norton's intimations that she might not be in America to look for her husband, but as a spy.

Never before in his life had he been so perplexed; he wished Lady Melderode at the bottom of the sea. Rachel had already expressed her doubts as to Colonel Burr; there was no question as to what she would say of this woman, who quite remarkably was journeying through the west in close proximity to the former Vice-President of the Republic.

Lady Melderode, quite regal in the rude hickory chair in which she sat with her light gray cloak flowing from her shoulders, had also been doing some thinking. Her reference to Colonel Burr had been a deplorable mistake. Burr's affairs with women had been no secret in Philadelphia and this puritan countryman undoubtedly had heard the gossip. He was far from dull; he had seen Burr in her house and it was not unlikely that behind the blue eyes of this former senator there lurked suspicions as to the accidental nature of her meeting with the colonel. It had been a serious error on her part not to act on Burr's hint that she eliminate the Cumberland from her itinerary.

She was stupid not to have thought of the possibility of Burr's entertainment by the Jacksons, but Burr himself had not foreseen that. She herself had hoped to be invited to the Jackson house and she was curious as to the wife who, Norton had said, at the time of Jackson's resignation, was the lure that had taken the Tennessean home.

"Dear me! Your eyes wander; you are

vastly bored! I am keeping you from better business." She gathered up the cloak and rose with a sigh. "I should be grateful if you would direct me to the best of your inns; I really must have a night away from the boat. My quarters are close and I need exercise—a gallop on a horse, which I dare say the tavern can furnish me."

The plaintive touch she gave this might prove effective; it was worth trying at least. But Jackson, quickly on his feet, was not so easy to wheedle on his home soil as in the Philadelphia atmosphere.

"I advise you against the inns, Madam. Women do not travel alone in these parts. You would be safe enough, but at times rough characters pay the settlement a visit. I counsel you to keep to your boat."

"And why don't you add," she demanded, white with anger, "why don't you say that the sooner I leave this miserable hole the better?"

"For the excellent reason, Madam, that you know that as well as I."

"When you rescued me at Mrs. Bingham's the night those stupid Listons saw fit to insult me, I thought you were a man of knightly spirit. But you evidently believed the unkind stories you heard about me in Philadelphia and now see fit to order me from this place. What's become of your chivalry? I had really looked forward with pleasure to meeting your wife and seeing this country to which you are so devoted. I think," she added, "that in spite of you I shall remain for a few days! You try to frighten me as to the danger from rough frontiersmen, but I will put myself under the protection of the tavern keeper. You shall not have the satisfaction of driving me away as if I were a criminal!"

Several emigrant wagons, a few pedestrians and horsemen had passed during their colloquy and Jackson with his woodsman's instinct had turned his head at every sound. He knew the gait of all the horses of quality in the district—General Robertson's bay mare, John Overton's long-stepper, Bob Hays' black stallion; and having assisted in the purchase of Fowler's equine equipment, he could have named his friend's horses in the dark from their peculiarities of motion.

It was some distance from the office to the tavern and it was still farther to the wharf, where presumably the wandering lady's barge was moored. Jackson was increasingly perplexed. Fowler, now thoroughly established as a citizen of the community, might be lingering at one of the inns or stores, talking to other settlers as was his habit, and it was quite conceivable that he might emerge from one of his trading or loafing places at the very moment when Lady Melderode stepped from Jackson's office.

His only concern was to get rid of the woman before she had a chance to see her husband, or the man who had borne that relationship to her. He was determined to prevent a meeting between the man he held in warm affection and the woman who had wronged him.

"I would not have you think, Madam—" he began.

He had not yet replied to those last caustic remarks of Lady Melderode's and was meditating what answer he could make when his alert ears caught the sound of horses approaching. Overton—there was no mistaking that long stride; and Fowler—yes, that was the steady rhythmic beat of Fowler's handsome chestnut mare.

"Let me repeat, Madam, that I deeply regret that circumstances make it impossible to entertain you in my house—"

But Lady Melderode had taken a step nearer the door and stopped short with a quick intake of breath. Overton and Fowler, in their plain frontiersman's garb with the brim of his wool hat pushed up from his forehead, was laughingly replying to some remark made by his companion. Neither he nor Overton glanced toward the office, but Lady Melderode's eyes were fixed upon them. Fowler, on the further side, with his face turned toward Overton, all

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unconsciously was exposing himself to her gaze. His laugh rang out at some jest of his companion. No one who had ever known John Fowler could have failed to recognize him.

"As I was saying—" began Jackson, who in his agitation did not know what he had begun to say.

But Lady Melderode had sprung to the door, staring after the men until they passed from sight.

She walked slowly back to her chair and grasped it for support.

"That was Melderode!" she said faintly. "That was my husband."

"Yes," Jackson responded.

"You've known—you've known all the time? How long has he been here?" she demanded. The spirit had gone out of her, and she sank into the chair.

"He is my friend; I'm sorry, Madam, but I refuse to answer any questions as to his coming here. But I don't mind saying he is established as a planter and seems to be content. It's because he's found peace among our people that I have no intention of permitting you to meet him. No good could come of it."

"Ah! That is the way you feel about it! He has told you, I suppose, *his* story of our separation and you believe it." She was calm again and her head went up defiantly.

"Yes, I believe it," Jackson returned quietly, his gaze meeting hers steadily.

"Why should I have made search for him if his accusations were true?"

"To annoy and harass him," Jackson responded. "I can believe you capable of it."

"You think so ill of me as that?"

"If you must know my opinion, a woman who breaks a man's spirit and drives him into exile—utterly wrecks his life—"

"Ah, you have no pity—no compassion!"

"None," he answered. "I know my friend for a man of scrupulous honor—not the man to fling aside his wife on mere rumor as to her chastity."

"You knew him before you met me and you told him, I suppose, that I was in America?"

"I told him nothing. It was my duty as his friend to help him forget. He's happy and content in his labors here; he's one of the most highly respected citizens of the valley. In every way he's kind, generous and helpful. If he hadn't convinced me that it was you who were in the wrong I should have told him of meeting you; done what I could to bring you together. But I knew it would avail nothing. I leave it to you whether in all justice you should not spare him."

"He has buried his identity, I suppose—his name?"

"He's not known by his true name; my wife and I alone know it."

"If I could see him, perhaps—"

"You will not see him, Madam."

He stood between her and the door, his arms folded, a cold light in his eyes. Fowler's emotion on the day he drew her miniature from its place over his heart rose in Jackson's memory; but his determination was unshaken. It would be a cruel thing to permit a meeting of the two. At all hazards he would save Fowler the pain of that.

"But there are matters of business to be settled between us."

"Have you lived a clean life since you left him? If I were disposed to let you remain, that might carry some weight."

She was not prepared for this. Her face crimsoned and she drew herself up, quivering with fury. "You are piling up your insults, sir! How dare you speak to me in such a fashion!"

"For a friend I will go far, Madam. If your husband had any desire to see you he would have told me so long ago."

"You are cruel! You are unjust and pitiless!"

"Maybe I am; but that's for my own conscience. I am asking you, Madam, to be merciful for once in your life. I'd have a better opinion of you if you'd let this man live his life out in peace."



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"You take much upon yourself, sir! What if I should appeal to the authorities—what if I should denounce you—tell the villagers of the manner in which you've insulted me when I came to you with every right to expect courtesy?"

"I advise you against it. You'd not help yourself much by screaming over the house tops. I have a fair reputation in this community."

"I think there's a devil in you," she remarked as she rose, resuming her habitual languorous manner.

"I've heard that before," he replied dryly.

"Lord of the Universe—what would you have me do?" she drawled mockingly.

"It will be well for you to leave this place immediately. I will accompany you to your boat."

"And if I should refuse—scream and make a scene for you to explain to your villagers?"

"Colonel Burr would not be pleased," he answered quietly.

Far indeed from being a fool was this long-legged farmer, with his firm-set jaw and implacable eyes. His remark gave her pause. She had no great faith in Burr's chivalry. He would in all likelihood repudiate her if she created a disturbance, for she knew enough of the colonel's projects, hazy though they were, to understand that he was bent upon cultivating Jackson's friendship. She was beaten, but she would not bow her head in defeat.

"I think I'll return to my barge," she said as if the idea had just occurred to her.

As he walked beside her down the street, she spoke of her further plans quite as if nothing disagreeable had happened. She would go to New Orleans, which she had heard was quite fascinating—far less provincial than the cities of the Atlantic coast. These, she confided, had lately depressed her unspeakably. He listened gravely; answered her inquiries with all courtesy. At the wharf he inspected her boat, found it well stocked with provisions. Besides the boatmen there was the negroess to attend to her needs. There was no reason why she should not depart at once for the Ohio.

"I might return," she suggested mischievously with her rippling laugh. "It would be truly delicious to trick you."

"That is your privilege, Madam. But you would regret it."

The barge swung slowly out from the wharf. As he lifted his hat she flung him a kiss.

"Until our next meeting, General!" she cried gaily.



AGENTS

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Colonel Burr was greatly relieved by Lady Melderode's non-appearance. Sensitive as he was to social atmospheric conditions, he realized that her presence in Nashville during his stay at the Hermitage would have been extremely embarrassing. The Tennesseans were far more sophisticated than he had imagined; with all his romantic affection for the west, he was surprised by the dignity, as of an old civilization, that marked life on the Cumberland.

He saw clearly that Lady Melderode, his plaything for the time, could have contributed only a jarring note to the harmony in which he found himself. It was not against him with these friendly people that he had killed Hamilton, but an illicit relationship with an exotic creature like Lady Melderode would be sure to arouse antagonism. Even a man as clever as he knew himself to be might fail in the attempt to greet the amusing lady as a friend encountered by accident on the Ohio.

As the days passed he decided that being a person of volatile temperament she had forgotten her interest in seeing Jackson on his home ground and was seeking Indian prances farther down the river.

Satisfied that he had acted wisely in sending the woman on her way, Jackson continued his efforts to keep the colonel entertained. Burr's personal morals were one thing; his patriotism was quite another. Burr was the first man he had encountered in a long time whose ideas squared so perfectly with his own.

"Never in my life have I passed five happier

days!" declared the colonel, on the veranda of the Hermitage. "My boatmen will be expecting me and I must leave tomorrow."

"Business in court keeps me at home," said Jackson, "or I would accompany you to the Ohio. I think you will be more comfortable not to go overland to your barge so I'm providing you with the best boat in my fleet for that stage of your journey."

"That is like you, sir!" exclaimed Burr.

"You think of everything!"

He left the Hermitage at daybreak but not without ceremony. The negroes, having been impressed by his fine manners and knowing him for a distinguished personage, voluntarily gathered in the driveway to bid him God-speed. The colonel came out briskly to where his host and hostess awaited him on the veranda.

"Mrs. Jackson," he began with gracious formality, "I have never before known the true meaning of hospitality! You have made me feel at home from the moment I arrived. Your kindness has made me truly a member of your household. To say that I am grateful would be to confess my poor command of the language! But I thank you with all my heart."

"It has been a pleasure to have you here," Rachel replied. "And on your return we shall expect to see you again. I wish you all good fortune on your travels."

"I thank you, Madam."

He rode away to the accompaniment of the negroes' lusty farewells, graciously returning their salutations, calling most of them by name. Jackson rode with him into Nashville and established him on the boat.

In the fall the colonel was again in the Hermitage guest-room. He had added to his stock of maps and was full of schemes but seemed more particularly interested in colonization projects. The south and west must be developed; the opportunities were immeasurable! But Rachel was not more impressed than on his first visit. She feared that her restless spouse might take it into his head to leave the Hermitage and follow Burr to the colony in the southwest which was among his dreams; but again the colonel passed on.

"There's the fastest horse in Tennessee!" Jackson declared as he stood with Rachel at the barn-lot fence. "I reckon he'll show some of these fellows who think they know horseflesh what a real horse is. Bring him over here, 'Lijah! You scoundrel! Pick that straw out of his mane! Anybody'd think you lazy hounds had no eyes, the way you groom a horse!"

The boy grinned, discounting his master's ferocity. No eyes but the master's would have seen that wisp of straw! Truxton walked to the bars and poked his nose into Rachel's hand. Jackson had that day returned from Virginia with half a dozen of the well-bred animals in which he delighted. Truxton was a beast of power. Rachel did not need her expert husband's recital of the horse's merits to see that the big, clean-limbed stallion belonged to the equine aristocracy.

They watched with sophisticated appreciation the horse's spirited movement across the lot. And Truxton, turned loose in the pasture, kicked up his heels and neighed lustily. Rachel was glad that her lord had something new with which to amuse himself. His nature demanded novelty and change, and better that a horse should capture his fancy than the mysterious Colonel Burr.

Having resigned from the judgeship, Jackson had sought the governorship of Louisiana following Jefferson's purchase of that territory and Rachel knew that no matter how bravely he bore his disappointment he was hurt by the President's failure to give him the place. But always there was that prayer in her heart for his happiness. Truxton would serve well to keep my lord amused!

The stallion's arrival caused a flutter in the settlement, where every man was either actively or potentially a sportsman. He was under discussion at Winn's Tavern one afternoon when Thomas Swann joined the group of

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idlers. Swann, a recent addition to the community, was a Virginian and boasted much of his acquaintances and friends in the Old Dominion. While waiting for clients he flirted, lent an attentive ear to gossip and was disposed to speak condescendingly of even such local heroes as General Robertson and Captain Hays.

Swann had reason to dislike Jackson, who had beaten him in the first case he undertook in the Nashville court. Jackson had not only defeated him but had exposed the trickery of Swann's client in a manner that made the young attorney ridiculous in the eyes of judge and jury. The humiliation of this still rankled and he waited for a chance to retaliate. He had acquainted himself with all the circumstances of the Robards' divorce and in his own circle referred to that incident in unpleasant terms as highly discreditable to the Jacksons.

"I've seen Truxton," Swann remarked as he puffed his pipe. "Jackson was putting him through his paces at Clover Bottom yesterday. I know a dozen horses around here I'd rather own than Truxton."

"Name one!" demanded one of the idlers. "The General's ready to match Truxton against any horse in the state and I reckon he knows what he's about."

"Oh, anything Jackson's got's the best in the state!" replied Swann with a sneer. "You ask for a better horse than Truxton? Well, I'll name Captain Ervin's Plowboy."

He had lifted his voice to attract the attention of Captain Ervin and Charles Dickinson, who were absorbed in talk at a near-by table.

"What's this about Plowboy?" Ervin asked.

"I was saying, sir, that Plowboy is a better horse than Jackson's Truxton," Swann replied.

Ervin was a man of importance in the community and Dickinson, his son-in-law, was very popular among the young folk with whom Swann was eager to ingratiate himself.

"Well, we'll have to look into this," remarked Ervin good-naturedly.

"If Jackson wants a race we'll accommodate him," said Dickinson.

Jackson would rather brag about a horse than race him," Swann ventured. "I'll lay anything I've got that Plowboy's got more speed. I hope, sir, you'll give us a chance to see him run away from Truxton."

"He might and he might not," replied Ervin cautiously. "I understand Jackson won't race the horse except for big stakes and I'm not anxious to give the General any of my money."

"Well, we won't let Jackson's boasting scare us out," remarked Dickinson. "The General's got the big head and needs taking down."

There were murmurs of assent from the group about Swann, but Ervin frowned.

"That will do, Charlie," he said sharply. "We're all friends of the General. There isn't a man in Tennessee who'd go further to help a friend than Andy Jackson!"

As the summer waned hardly a week passed without an exciting race at Clover Bottom. Jackson was always present, the most keenly interested of all the spectators. His blood quivered as under no other inspiration at the sight of two evenly matched horses flying over the course. That year he had raced other horses of the Hermitage stables with varying success, but Truxton, his pride, had not been put to a test because the horsemen of the Cumberland were wary of the Virginia stallion and in no haste to invite a contest.

Swann, impatient at Jackson's immunity from challenge, urged Dickinson to encourage Ervin to run Plowboy against Truxton.

Dickinson, like Swann, was a new practitioner at the Nashville bar. He was a Marylander, of good antecedents and well educated, and his marriage to Ervin's daughter had added to his prestige. He was regarded as one of the most promising young men in the valley, marked for a successful career. A crowd gathered whenever his sonorous voice, reverberating from the court-house, gave notice that he was addressing a jury. Conceited and arrogant, he was likely to become quarrelsome when he lingered too long in the drink shops. Among his other accomplishments he was an

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expert shot. A likable fellow, but dangerous where his ire was aroused.

At his importunity Ervin began to think seriously of running Plowboy against Truxton. The prospect of closing the season with an event that would surpass every other incident on the Tennessee turf became the matter most discussed in taverns and stores. Ervin, encouraged by Dickinson to believe that Plowboy could easily beat Truxton, finally proposed a race.

"You think you've got a better horse than Plowboy," he said, meeting Jackson at Winn's. "If you want to race Truxton against my horse, name the stakes."

"Two thousand dollars, the race to be run ten days from today and a forfeit of eight hundred dollars if either party withdraws," Jackson answered promptly.

"I'll have to give you notes," said Ervin.

"That's agreeable to me," Jackson replied. "I'll want to give notes myself. Come to my office when you're ready—the sooner the better."

The next day Ervin and Dickinson appeared at Jackson's office and declared themselves ready to discuss terms. Jackson, still crippled by his financial difficulties due to Allison's failure, volunteered his own paper and the notes of three friends.

"I want you to be satisfied in every particular," he said. "Major Anderson, Major Verrell and Captain Pryor are good?"

"I couldn't ask better names," Ervin answered. "Charles Dickinson is going partners with me in this and we'll put in other notes of hand I'm holding. Notes on both sides to be demand paper."

Ervin named six substantial citizens of the valley who were to share the stake and Dickinson wrote them on a sheet of paper.

"Very good, gentlemen," said Jackson and thrust the memorandum into his pocket.

"Let the rules of the Clover Bottom course govern," said Ervin. "If any points occur to you, we can discuss them before the date."

Jackson rode home jubilant and told Rachel that at last she should have a chance to see Truxton show his mettle.

"That money's mine right now!" he exclaimed. "Truxton will win by ten lengths. Ervin wouldn't have asked for a race if Dickson hadn't screwed him up to it."

"I watched the boys exercising Truxton this morning," remarked Rachel. "He looks as if he'd run away from the wind."

In Nashville discussion waxed hot; fights occurred; men borrowed money to wager on the race. In the days that intervened Jackson, up with the sun, gave personal care to Truxton, planning the strategy of the race, counseling the black boy he had chosen as jockey as to every imaginable emergency.

Rachel, always sensitive to every change in his moods, saw his happiness and rejoiced. He must win the race; she was as thoroughly aroused as he over the prospect of victory.

Riding into Nashville two days before the appointed time Jackson learned that Captain Ervin was seeking him. Some detail of the race, perhaps; he went through the town inquiring for the captain and found him at Bell's store.

"Jackson," Ervin began immediately, "I'm ready to pay my forfeit. Plowboy went lame yesterday—his left forefoot's badly swollen. I'm ready to deliver the notes and cover the forfeit."

"Damned bad luck, captain! I'm mighty sorry. I'd rather have the race than your money."

"Nothing's proved till it's tried. I still hold I've got the better horse," said Ervin.

On their way to Jackson's office they picked up Dickinson and several others who had been interested in the contest, and the notes were delivered. Jackson, good sportsman and sincere horse-lover, was keenly disappointed and betrayed no elation at the abandonment of the race.

"Are the notes according to agreement?"

Ervin asked, handing over the slips of paper. "They cover Dickinson's share and my own."

"They are what you promised," Jackson assented. "When Plowboy's leg clears up you'll find me ready to talk business again."

They shook hands under the eyes of a dozen disappointed spectators who had collected in the room. Dickinson repaired to Winn's bar, where he found Swann and acquainted him with Plowboy's misfortune.

"Jackson's luck's too good to last," he said loudly. "But by God, it's going to change some day! He's trampled on everybody in Tennessee who wouldn't bend the servile knee to him!"

"Be careful, Charlie, what you say about the General," admonished one of the group.

"Hell! You don't think I'm afraid of Andrew Jackson!" cried Dickinson, glaring at the speaker. "I'd like to know what excuse he's got for his uppish airs! Every time there's a political job anywhere he thinks he's got to have it. He went to Washington to get the Louisiana governorship. My God! Presumptuous ass! He didn't fool Thomas Jefferson!"

"And Jefferson made a mistake in not appointing him!" put in one of Jackson's friends. "He'd have been the right man for the place!"

"Oh, you're one of the faithful bootlickers, are you?" Dickinson sneered. "A man who floats down the river with another man's wife and pretends to marry her when she's still a married woman may be a gentleman—but by God—not to me!"

"I'd be careful what I say on that subject, sir!" one of Jackson's friends interposed. "It's not the part of a gentleman to besmirch a woman's character in a barroom."

"Another of Jackson's sycophants, eh?" retorted Dickinson.

"You're drunk," said the other contemptuously, and moved away, leaving Dickinson to continue his arraignment of Jackson.

Dickinson's remarks, caught up and repeated, presently reached Jackson's ears. He was furious, inspected his pistols, resolved to kill the man on sight. But—to kill Dickinson and let the reason be known would revive gossip about that unhappy business of the divorce, and Rachel would be the sufferer. It would break her gentle, trusting heart; and Rachel's peace was always his first consideration. He would bide his time. The God of Rachel's faith would punish her slanderer.

His mind never functioned so perfectly as when on horseback and on his long rides his thoughts concentrated upon Dickinson. He must find some way of silencing that slanderous tongue but in a way that would protect Rachel. His speculations drew a wide circle about his grievance, but he was firm in his belief that ultimately the line would tighten and crush his enemy.

Swann, with few professional employments, harvested the aftermath of the race that was never run. There were skeptics who refused to accept Ervin's reason for withdrawing Plowboy, and Swann rallied to the defense, for had he not with his own eyes seen Plowboy's crippled leg?

He picked up a report that Jackson was complaining that the notes for the forfeit money were not according to agreement. Hearing this, with rumors that Dickinson was responsible for the story, the lord of the Hermitage smiled grimly. That circle which he had first seen as broad as the serene Tennessee autumn sky was surely tightening. He would watch, listen and wait.

At Bell's store, in the court-house and in the public rooms of the taverns, Mr. Swann, late of Virginia—as he thus proudly signed his name—collected rumors and winged them for new flights. Others of Jackson's enemies covertly urged him on, thinking that he would irritate the General if he did no more.

Swann, puffed with importance, declared that Jackson had, at the Clover Bottom store, informed him that while Dickinson's forfeit notes were according to agreement, Captain Ervin's were not. A few days after Christmas Jackson decided to take notice of this assertion.

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He rode into town with John Coffee, picked up Fowler at Bell's, and went to Winn's in the hope of finding Swann or Dickinson. Swann, however, was not visible, but Dickinson was there with Ervin.

"Captain Ervin," Jackson began immediately, "what's this story that little feist Swann is circulating about the notes? He seems anxious to take licking."

"The matter's of no importance, General," Ervin replied. "But there's some talk going round that you're not satisfied about the notes. I take it for granted that if the notes we gave you were not according to agreement you would have come to me direct."

"You're right, Captain Ervin. But I object to this slinking cur meddling in my affairs."

Dickinson, who had remained seated, exclaimed quickly: "I'll have you know, General Jackson, that Mr. Swann's a friend of mine!"

"So! Then I congratulate you both!" Jackson retorted witheringly.

"Didn't you tell Swann at Clover Bottom that my notes were as agreed but that Captain Ervin's were not?" demanded Dickinson, springing to his feet. "Didn't you complain that Captain Ervin didn't give you notes immediately collectable as he promised? I ask you, sir, whether you haven't made such statements at various places and to various people and whether your friend Major Anderson hasn't been saying the same thing by your authority?"

"No, by God!" cried Jackson hotly. "Patten Anderson is a gentleman and a man of truth and I will answer for him that he uttered no such thing! Mark this, Mr. Dickinson!—whoever quotes me as saying the notes were not according to agreement is a damned cowardly liar! There's a way of settling this matter, sir! I think you understand what I mean."

"You're going too far, General Jackson!" cried Ervin, stepping between them. "That matter of the notes doesn't call for violence!"

"I beg your pardon, General," Dickinson mumbled.

"As you say, gentlemen," returned Jackson quietly. "Let's all have a drink!"

Several days passed before this meeting was reported to Swann and he was greatly alarmed to find that his whispered innuendos had reached the General's ears. Something was required of him and he dispatched a letter to the Hermitage demanding satisfaction on the field of honor.

"Impudent young whelp!" Jackson ejaculated as he tossed the letter into Rachel's lap. But he turned courteously to Swann's messenger. "My compliments, sir, to Mr. Thomas Swann. He has honored me with a challenge to fight. Pray tell him I refuse to meet him on the field of honor for the excellent reason that he is not a gentleman."

"That will make him all the madder," remarked Rachel when the astonished messenger had retired.

"That," laughed Jackson, "is what I want. I reckon he didn't expect that answer. I'll drop in at Winn's tomorrow and see what further he's got to say."

The logs in the tavern fireplace blazed merrily as Jackson, carrying a cane, walked briskly in. Silence fell upon the company as with a comprehensive greeting he walked to the fireplace, thrust the stick under his arm and extended his hands to the blaze.

"Mr. Jackson!" began Swann, jumping from his chair. "I've got a matter to settle with you, sir! I sent you a letter yesterday calling you to the field of honor for the aspersions you have cast upon my character. You sent a verbal reply that you declined to meet me—declined, I am informed, for the reason that you question my right to the name of gentleman!"

"That is correct," said Jackson calmly. "You shall pay for this!" screamed Swann, white with fury.

"Take this on account!" cried Jackson and springing forward he laid his cane vigorously across the young man's shoulders.



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The blow was delivered with a force that carried Jackson over a chair and onto the floor, but he was up instantly, still grasping the stick. Swann, with his back to the wall, was trying to draw a pistol.

"I can't allow this!" cried the landlord, rushing from the bar. "There must be no shooting here!"

"Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Winn," remarked Jackson. "The little mongrel won't shoot me—not even in the back! Set out whisky for all these gentlemen—mind you, sir! I say all the gentlemen present."

He pointed his stick at Swann, to accentuate the fact of his exclusion from the proffered refreshment. Swann's pistol remained concealed by his coat tails while Jackson, warmed by a hot toddy, left the room.

But that night, after Rachel had gone to bed, he decided to reply to Swann's letter. Swann was nothing—hardly worth kicking into the Cumberland—but the time had come to draw Dickinson further into the circle of his hatred. He wrote and rewrote, with ambiguities and equivocations so foreign to his habit as to seem the work of another hand.

Hearing Rachel's step in the room above, he lifted his head and his face relaxed. She was singing—his Rachel, whom he had sworn to love and protect—one of the quaint ballads she loved. Dickinson must die before the Tennessee air would be sweet again. He pondered his letter anew, noting with satisfaction these words that flamed amid the irrelevant, colorless sentences that surrounded them:

There are certain traits that always accompany the gentleman and man of truth. The moment he hears harsh expressions applied to a friend he will immediately communicate them, that explanation may take place, when the base poltroon and cowardly talebearer will always act in the background. You can apply the latter to Mr. Dickinson and see which best fits him. I write it for his eye. And the latter I emphatically intend for him.

Swann, greatly disturbed, read and reread this with growing befuddlement. He evidently had not made himself clear to the General. Or the General had been drunk when he wrote. He ran with the letter to Dickinson, a much cleverer man than he; but Dickinson, too, was bewildered by the verbiage and ambiguities of the General's communication. It was wholly unlike Jackson to slip an insult for one man into a letter directed to another.

Dickinson wrote a reply, reviewing the history of the notes; a tame rejoinder, Swann thought, still smarting from the vicious thwack of Jackson's cane. But there was more to follow. He seized from the press that day's issue of the Impartial Review and flew with it to Dickinson, that his friend might read a communication from the Hermitage in which they were both savagely attacked. Swann found himself described as the puppet and lying valet for a worthless, drunken, blackguard scoundrel.

The loungers at Winn's would not fail to note this tribute and Mr. Swann was not without his sensibilities. Having frequently sneered at Jackson as an illiterate person, Dickinson was astonished and enraged to find how neatly the lord of the Hermitage had turned off sentences that cut two ways.

No longer restrained by his father-in-law, he wrote a letter to the General promising to hold him responsible for his utterances; and another to the newspaper of the same tenor.

Whereupon without waiting for his letter to be delivered he departed for New Orleans with a cargo of slaves and cotton. Swann, having been grossly insulted and caned in his efforts to tell the world the truth about the horse-race, did not relish the idea of being left to support Charles Dickinson's cause when Dickinson saw fit to leave the rigors of a Tennessee winter for the salubrious airs of Louisiana. But Dickinson was already on the river.

Satisfied that Dickinson would return in the spring, Jackson noted that Swann's tongue

continued to wag. Apparently half the men in the valley had taken sides in the controversy; the weekly issues of the Impartial Review bristled with letters; affidavits bearing upon the question of the notes filled many pockets.

Swann, though grieved by Dickinson's departure, found joy in the attention he was receiving. From eminent citizens of Virginia came letters certifying that he was a person of breeding, entitled to every consideration as a gentleman, but without effect upon the grim master of the Hermitage, whose remark that if Thomas Swann was as big a fool with a pistol as he was with his tongue he wasn't worth killing, caused merriment in the taverns.

Dickinson was back in April. His trip had been profitable and he had found the flesh-pots of New Orleans to his taste. The controversy over the horse-race had been obscured by pleasant experiences and he was furious when he found that Swann had kept the pot simmering and that Nashville had anxiously awaited his own return to supply the fuel that would bring it to the boiling-point.

Confident as he was that he could shoot quicker and straighter than any other man in Tennessee, he had decided that it would not be to his advantage to kill Jackson. He expected to spend the remainder of his life in Nashville and the slaying of a man as popular as the General would not help his prospects. In his vexation at finding the horse-race still a live issue he would much rather have fought and killed Swann. But Swann, meddlesome fool, had been supporting his cause and he couldn't repudiate him now. He feverishly read the back numbers of the Impartial Review and realized that he could not ignore the epithet Jackson had applied to him.

Cursing Swann's officiousness, it dawned upon him, as he sat down to reply to Jackson, that there was more in the General's animosity than appeared. Those spiteful comments he had made about Mrs. Jackson and the Robards' divorce! That was months ago but here, he surmised, lay the real burden of his offending. Jackson, far shrewder than he had believed him, had, with nice calculation, chivalrously protecting his wife's name from further gossip, so manipulated the petty affair of the forfeit money as to make it an excuse for forcing him to the field of honor.

The valley was waiting to hear from him and he composed a letter for publication in which he denounced Jackson for refusing Swann satisfaction, charged the General with evasion and cowardice and made clear his own willingness to meet him on the field of honor. He closed haughtily with the announcement that he was leaving for Maryland the following week and any business the General might have with him required immediate attention.

Jackson, hastily summoned by the editor, read Dickinson's letter.

"Going to Maryland, is he? Seems to be the gentleman's habit to write letters and run away from the consequences. Mr. Dickinson will not go to Maryland!"

The circle of his vengeance was tightening about Dickinson. He wrote a challenge, found General Thomas Overton, John's brother, and asked him to deliver it and make all necessary arrangements for a meeting.

There was a quibble between Doctor Cattle, designated as Dickinson's second, and Overton as to the time.

"What! The scoundrel wants me to wait a week?" demanded Jackson, when this was reported to him. "I thought he was going to Maryland and wanted immediate accommodation!"

"Cattle says he has no dueling-pistols," Overton explained.

"Another of his lies—a subterfuge!" Jackson cried. "Swann's boasting that Dickinson's been practising all winter getting ready to kill me, and now he has no weapons!"

Dickinson was obstinate and refused to be hurried. The stipulations for the duel named the thirtieth of May as the time and fixed the scene on Red River, across the Kentucky

border, beyond.

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border, beyond the reach of Tennessee law. In the peace of the Hermitage Jackson told Rachel what impended; tried to make light of it as a thing of no importance—merely an inconvenience in view of the pressing work on the farms!

Brought up as she had been among men of high courage and daring, she uttered no word of protest; only took his hand.

"And all because of Truxton," she said, smiling bravely. "That young Mr. Swann seems to have started a lot of trouble. It seems so terrible that men must fight to settle differences. Perhaps if you could meet Mr. Dickinson you could settle it all peaceably."

"No chance of that. It's gone too far, my dear," he said kindly, grateful for her innocence. Thank God! she knew nothing of the fierce passion in his heart or what had kindled it.

On the morning before the day appointed for the duel he was abroad at daylight. It was a fifteen hours' ride to Red River and he was acting on Rachel's suggestion that he complete the journey in season to enjoy a refreshing sleep the night before the meeting. Her courage held to the moment of parting. An observer might have thought, as she bade him good-by on the veranda steps, that only some trivial affair was calling him away.

"God bless you, my husband."

"And keep you, my dear wife!"

He held her to his heart in a long embrace, and then releasing her, looked smilingly into her eyes.

"Do not fear for me. Have no dark thoughts as to the result. If I find the roads bad I may rest a day before starting back, but I shall return in safety."

She watched him mount and waved her hand as he turned at the gate for a last look before putting his horse to the gallop.

The two Overtons, Fowler, and several other friends, including a surgeon, were waiting when Jackson reached the rendezvous. They struck off toward the north, a dignified company, marked by a subdued businesslike air; one might have mistaken them for a party of lawyers riding circuit. Thomas Overton, a veteran of the Revolution and an authority on all that pertained to the code, rode at Jackson's side discussing details of the encounter.

"Don't try to shoot first," he counseled. "I've watched Dickinson at target practise and he shoots quick. He's had a dummy of your figure set up in Ervin's corn field for a week to practise on and he's bragged that he'll aim at a button over your heart and drive it through you. We'll fool him about that. When you step to the line let your coat fall back and hang loose."

As they made their way quietly over the rough road farmers along the way began to give them reports of the passing of Dickinson and his party. Accompanied by a large retinue, Dickinson had started an hour earlier. They were making a lark of the journey, singing ribald songs and jesting as to the fate in store for Jackson. They paused frequently to set up targets for Dickinson to puncture.

"The fool thinks he can scare me," remarked Jackson after inspecting a series of these evidences of Dickinson's marksmanship. He reined in his horse and extended his hand that his companions might note its steadiness.

"Let him wear himself out," growled Overton. "His confidence is mostly whisky."

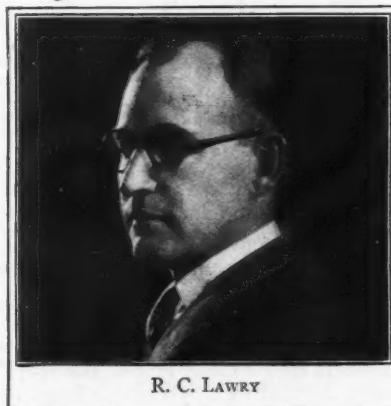
"He bet five hundred dollars he'd kill me. I've got a long list of cowardly braggarts who've sworn to kill me," said Jackson with a grin. "There's a nest of 'em over at Knoxville."

"Sevier's crowd," observed Overton. "Kill Dickinson and you've killed them all."

Jackson's party found lodging at Dave Miller's tavern, and Dickinson and his friends established themselves at Harrison's, some distance away. Jackson ate substantial supper and over his pipe discussed politics. His friends were amazed at his calmness.

The next morning when Overton went down

The Man Who Works Miracles Ridding Women of Hair



R. C. LAWRY

How, By Means of a Simple Discovery, a Middle-West Scientist Is Proving, to the Wonder of the Cosmetic World, That Hair on Arms and Legs Can Not Only Be Removed Completely—But Bristly Re-Growth Be Entirely Avoided and All Re-Growth Delayed Indefinitely . . . What It Is and How to Use It

THAT the arm and leg hair every woman detests can not only be completely removed, but kept from growing back indefinitely with the bristly, coarse growth, skin roughness and enlarged pores following the razor and other commonly used ways, is now an established scientific fact.

An entirely new light has been thrown on the situation. Noted cosmeticians are taking back everything they ever said about hair removal and standing amazed before the recent discovery of R. C. Lawry, famed Mid-



By a total and altogether delightful absence of stubble, one can instantly feel the difference between this and old ways.

Western scientist. The hair-removing problem, it would seem, is largely ended for women. Resembling in texture a superlatively fine beauty clay, the preparation embodying this discovery is simply spread over the surface from which the hair is to be removed. Then rinsed off with lukewarm water. That is all. It goes without saying, of course, that NEET contains no caustic or any of the poisonous chemicals associated with old-time "depilatories."

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Slows Growth Seven Times!

This discovery is now compounded in the hair-removing preparation called NEET. A preparation on the American market some years, but recently radically changed in compounding to embody the Lawry discovery. After the first application, normal hair growth (reappearance of the hair) is slowed 7 times. Think what this means.

Largely on the advice of beauty experts, women are flocking to this new creation. It simplifies amazingly the whole hair-removing problem. It definitely ends the stimulated hair growth thousands of women today are suffering from the razor. It is said to come closer than any other way yet found to discourage the growth of hair on women.

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The preparation "NEET"—embodiment of the complete Lawry discovery—is now on sale at all drug, department stores and beauty parlors. The usual price is \$1. There is also a 60¢ size. Obtain at your drug, department store, or beauty parlor, or, if you cannot be supplied, use the coupon below for supply by mail. The \$1 size contains three times the quantity of the 60¢ size.



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to the public room he found Jackson placidly reading an old copy of the Philadelphia Gazetteer. The landlord gave them coffee and at six they set out for the dueling ground, an isolated spot across Red River a mile from the tavern.

No one accompanied them but the Nashville surgeon, as Overton said the fewer witnesses present the better. The ferryman not appearing, Jackson impatiently urged his horse down the bank and across the stream, calling to his companions to follow. He was in one of his rare light moods, joking with Overton as they followed the rough trail through the woods.

They were first on the field, but Dickinson with Cattlet and two other friends arrived a few minutes later. The traditional courtesies were punctiliously exchanged.

The distance—twenty-four feet—was carefully measured off and pegs driven as markers in a smooth meadow surrounded by a heavy growth of poplars. Overton and Cattlet conferred in businesslike tones perfectly audible to the principals. Dickinson sat on a log as he waited, impassive, quite as if the proceedings did not greatly interest him. Jackson, equally indifferent, raised his head to follow the flight of a cardinal that crossed the field like a flash of flame. Dickinson laughed ironically when Cattlet, giving the ground a last inspection, picked up a few twigs and flung them aside.

"You don't think this is a running match, do you, Cattlet?" he asked with a smile.

Dickinson won the toss for position, which meant that Jackson must face the sun. This was accepted without comment and the preparations proceeded with mechanical precision, as if the affair were a part of some common routine. The dew still sparkled in the grass; a light breeze stirred the tree tops. The seconds inspected the pistols, expressed their satisfaction and handed them to the principals, who at once took their positions.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?"

Dickinson moved slightly, relaxing his shoulders, giving a twitch to his stock. Jackson remained immovable, the pistol at his side.

"Fire!" cried Overton in his high shrill voice.

As quick as lightning Dickinson's arm rose and his weapon cracked sharply as it discharged.

"God!" muttered Overton under his breath.

He was watching Jackson intently. A flutter of dust—barely perceptible—from Jackson's coat just below one of the big buttons had indicated where the ball struck. Jackson raised his left arm unburdened and laid it tightly across his chest. He had not flinched or wavered and his inexorable eyes gave no sign of pain; but his jaw tightened as his teeth gripped a bullet he had put in his mouth—a common practise of duelists to avoid biting their tongues in a paroxysm of pain in case they were hit.

"Great God!" gasped Dickinson. "Have I missed him!"

In his consternation, mystified, awed by the erect, implacable figure before him, he involuntarily stepped back a pace.

"Back to the peg, sir!" cried Overton.

"I beg your pardon, sir," Dickinson muttered and resumed his place.

Jackson, his left arm still supporting his breast, raised his pistol slowly and pulled the trigger, but the weapon stopped at half-cock. Under the rules this was not to count as a shot, and he drew back the hammer, took careful aim and fired.

Silence held the world. The little puff of smoke from the muzzle of Jackson's pistol was caught up and borne away languidly on the breeze. No one spoke or moved. Dickinson, dropping his pistol, broke the moment's tension just as it became intolerable. He turned his head slowly, gazing about him with distended, startled eyes. Suddenly his look of bewilderment passed and his face was distorted in agony. His head sank as if he had received a blow, and he fell into Cattlet's arms.

In the shade of the wood they laid him down and pillow'd his head with their coats. The surgeons tore away his clothing, saw the gaping wound, conferred in whispers. He was shot through the bowels, the ball passing clear through his body. Nothing could be done for him; inevitably he would bleed to death.

"Come away," said Overton, gently touching Jackson's arm. "There's nothing we can do."

As they were mounting their horses Overton suddenly cried out in alarm.

"What's that, General? Are you hit?" He pointed to Jackson's shirt, where blood was showing.

"Only a trifle," Jackson replied impatiently. "For God's sake don't let him have the satisfaction of knowing it! It's only a scratch in the chest."

"You'd better rest here while I dress your wound," said Jackson's surgeon.

"I'm not hurt, I tell you!" Jackson protested angrily. "I'll not whimper over any wound that scoundrel could give me."

"Poor devil!" muttered Overton. "He never doubted that he would kill you."

"When it comes my time to die I'll die," Jackson flared, "and not a day sooner. That was my mother's religion and it's my wife's and by the eternal God! I believe it."

They rode slowly back to the tavern and in the yard he caught sight of a negress churning on the kitchen porch and asked for a cup of buttermilk, drank it and, urged by Overton, went to his room and yielded himself to the doctor's care. At noon he sent one of his company to inquire as to Dickinson's condition and to tender the services of his own surgeon.

"There's a bottle of brandy in my greatcoat," he said to Fowler. "Take it to Dickinson; it may ease his last hours."

Throughout the day of agony Dickinson cursed the man who had given him his mortal wound. Toward nightfall he mercifully became unconscious and at nine o'clock he was dead.

Jackson stubbornly rejected Cattlet's advice, reinforced by the plea of Jackson's own surgeon, Overton and Fowler, that he remain at the tavern while his wound healed.

"I'm going home tomorrow—at sunup!" he announced when he heard the news that Dickinson was dead. "There'll be talk in Tennessee about this business and I'll not have people think I'm afraid to face it."

"We'll take care of the critics," said Overton. "Everything was regular and according to the code. No duel was ever carried out more fairly."

"Overton," said Jackson impressively, raising himself on his elbow, "I'd have killed him if he'd shot me through the brain!"

He would ride his horse, as he had come, he declared, when they proposed that he travel in a wagon.

"I'll not be carried home in a damned litter!"

He was weak from loss of blood and his wound throbbed, but when they began the homeward journey he sat his saddle like a trooper and uttered no word of complaint.

It was late in the night when they reached the Hermitage, but lights glimmered through the shutters—Rachel's lights!

"You can leave me here," said Jackson at the gate that opened into the long tree-lined avenue that led to the door.

His friends begged to accompany him into the house, as there might be some service they could render him. But he would have none of this; Rachel might be alarmed. By the eternal God! he would cross the threshold of his house alone, giving no outward sign of his injury!

They dismounted and followed a little way, saw his gaunt figure limped in the light as the door opened, heard Rachel's joyous cry as she gathered him in her arms.

Jackson's loyalty involves him in the questionable ventures of the wily Colonel Burr, and the storm-clouds of war rapidly approach, in Meredith Nicholson's romance of the Southwest — Next Month

Blood of the Crellins (Continued from page 65)

trepidation, he dropped to one knee, put out a timid hand and touched her. He could feel her sudden rigidity of fright.

He had not the faintest idea what she was like except that she looked small and sounded young and that her clothes were not of silk but some rough stuff that felt shoddy even in the dark. She might be a negress for all he knew, or of any race. But she was of the human race, and so was he.

To reassure her in her evident terror he faltered: "I—I beg your pardon. I don't mean to intrude. But—isn't there something I can't be of some service?"

The bitter noise stopped. He could feel that she had lifted her head from her arms and was staring at him. All she said was:

"Go on away and lea' me alone, can't you?"

He felt well slapped in the face, but ventured a word of self-justification: "Of course I can. But—really—it's rather gashly to leave a—a human being out here in such distress. Are you sure that I can't be of some help?"

"I wish you'd go away."

"All right. But—well, for one thing you'll catch a dreadful cold there, you know. That won't help much, will it now?"

"What differ'nce'd it make? I wisht I was dead."

"Oh, I say! A pretty girl like you."

"I'm not pretty. I'm ugly and nobody likes me and I hate myself and I want to die. Will you go on away, or won't you?"

"Certainly not. This is a public park and I have just as much right to sit here as you have."

He sat down by her. She gathered herself together and tried to rise, but fell against him. He caught her by the arms, seated her at his side with a strength that amazed her. She grew truculent to hide her terror:

"Say, who do you think you are anyway?"

"I'm not much, I assure you. And I'm just as lonesome as you are. I wish you'd be sensible and tell me what's wrong. I'm utterly no use to myself. I might be of some use to you. Try me. Remember the lion and the mouse?"

"Say, what asylum did they let you out of? If I was even a mouse I'd have a hole to crawl into. It's more'n I got now."

"That's too bad—that's rotten! Tell a fellow about it."

It took a deal of coaxing, but he had a way with him and her burden was more than she could bear alone. He gradually elicited from her a story as shoddy as the coat whose shoulder he had touched. She was evidently poor and ignorant. But he felt more at ease with her than if she had been of the respectable middle class, for, snob that he was, he loved his own sort and the opposite, but could not stand the layer between.

He did not ask her name or her origin, nor did she ask his. She poured out a sordid story of poverty from birth, and of toil from the time when she had played mother to her younger brothers and sisters to the early years of her work as a cash-girl, a sweat-shop seamstress, a scullery maid, a laundress, a saleswoman. She had saved up a pittance in her Oswego home and had come to New York to better her fortune.

There were thousands like her in New York. But that made her sorrow the more heroic to Michael.

Michael had heard no end of hard-luck stories and had put no end of people on their feet. Many of them had fallen off again, but some had gone striding forward and some had repaid him with a usury of gratitude.

The girl was going on with her story, not whining, not complaining at all now, but wisely and intellectually aware of her hopelessness. Her night had no sane hope of dawn. The final blow had fallen when she lost her room. Michael had heard and read enough of landladies to abhor them.

"The heartless beast!" he groaned.

"Oh, no, Mrs. Gilley kept me as long as she could. She's as good as they make 'em. She's

got her own rent to pay and a husband to support. He's sick most of the time and drunk the rest, and she has a pack of children that are always hungry.

"I got out when a lodger came along with a week's pay in advance, and me owing her a week. But I had no place else to go. Lucky for me the night's so warm. I came up here to think things over. I walked round the reservoir once trying to get up the nerve to climb over the rail and say, 'Here goes nothin' from nowhere goin' back where it came from.' But I hadn't the nerve.

"That's what I was boohooing about. I don't seem to have nerve for anything. I usedn't to be afraid of anything. Lately I'd look for a job and be afraid to ask for it when I got to the place. I haven't had a square meal in I don't know when. My clothes are fallin' off me in shreds. I don't look respectable or even sober and I've always been both anyways. And now that I've reached the end of my rope I haven't got the nerve to let go."

She began to cry again, feebly, shamefaced.

He thought of many wonderful things to do for her. He could buy her a palace, servants, jewels, fine raiment. But would she be any happier? Was he any happier for all those possessions?

He indulged in a bit of fantastic reverie for a while, then returned to common sense. He knew of no magic for ending human misery in general, yet there were certain unhappinesses that could be removed. Hunger, thirst, nakedness—could be dispelled; weariness could be given a place to rest its anxious head.

He listened till the tale was told and the girl mumbled in conclusion:

"Well, that's my story and I guess you could tell me another one like it. You sound like a swell, but you're probly down and out, too. Were you plannin' to sleep in the park, too?"

"Not tonight. I'm up against it about as close as you are as far as happiness goes, but I'm not quite stony yet. I could lend you a bit."

"Fat chance you'd have of gettin' it back."

"I could even stand that blow, if it were less than a million dollars."

"How much is that? Ten dollars would make me feel like a millionaire."

"Permit me to give you that dubious pleasure."

He took from his pocket a little parcel of bills, tens and twenties on the inside and a few ones on the outside, for tips. He peeled from the inside ten bank-notes, counting them aloud. He held them out in the dark.

Her voice came to him instead of her hand: "Say, who are you anyway—a god?"

"Well, if you add 'damned fool' to that, you might describe me perfectly. Here, take this money."

"I can't. I oughtn't to. I don't know you. I've done nothin' to earn it."

"Oh, yes, you have, you've worked hard and tried hard, and you need it. If that's not earning—what is?"

"Could I borrow it?"

"If you'd rather."

From the impalpable invisible a hand formed against his like a little world growing out of the null and void. It was a cold hand, a small hand, but the skin was not smooth.

As he placed the bills in it, another hand was created alongside, and fingers raked the soft foliage of the money into two palms. It was amazing. It gave Michael the uncanniest thrill he had ever experienced: a voice in agony, two hands unseen but greedily eager and timid. There was a soul somewhere close to him that sat in the absolute black and sobbed and put forth hands.

One of the hands clenched about the bills and then lent the other a few fingers to clench about his hand. That fumbling of muscles meant all, and said more than any other eloquence could tell, of gratitude, of wonder, and of escape from ruin.

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Be sure to ask for double strength Othine as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove your freckles.

(Advertisement)

There she was, crying again. While his hand wrung hers and hers wrung his, he felt on his wrist a spatter of big wet splashes. There were eyes somewhere above those hands of hers, and lips fluttering with sobs, a bosom beneath, and a body and limbs. There was a woman there beside him, who had wanted to die and now could live.

It was a long while before she could fight down her grief of joy and try to save herself from the ultimate shame by saying: "I'll pay this back."

"That's as you please. There's no hurry about it."

"Who do I owe it to?"

"Nobody in particular."

"Well, you can't be so particular or you wouldn't be so nice to a nobody like me. Tell me who you are and where I can bring back the money when I get it."

"Suppose I call for it myself?"

"Where would you call? I got no place—unless I can get in with my landlady. I owe her some money. I'll go back there and pay her part of this. If I can't stay there I'll leave my new address."

She was honest anyway. That was something. He answered:

"All right. I'll call tomorrow."

"Tomorrow! I won't have the money. I'll have to get a job first. Maybe you can't spare it till then. Better take it back."

Her hands were groping for his. He squeezed them and restored them to her.

"I'm not in any haste for the money, but I thought I—I'd like to see you and learn how you're getting along."

"Oh! Well—it ain't a very nice place for callers."

"I don't mind."

"All right, about eight o'clock tomorrow night. Maybe if I got a job they'd give me an advance and I could pay back a couple of dollars anyways by tomorrow night."

"That's not why I want to call. Where will I find you?"

She told him a far eastern number and he wrote it in his memory.

She was in haste to be gone. He felt that she was a little afraid to linger lest she should attempt to collect some tenderness that she feared to indulge. He was afraid to walk with her into the light, lest she see that he was in full evening dress.

So he said: "I think I'll stop here awhile and smoke a cigaret. You run along and take a taxi home."

"Me a taxi!"

She laughed aloud at that with such an unimaginable hilarity and clarity and care-free youthfulness that he was more startled than ever. Out of the chaos of dark, he had seen created weeping, despair, gratitude, bravery, and now laughter.

"So you can laugh, too," said Michael.

"Why wouldn't I? I've got money. I can eat and sleep and pay car-fare looking for a job. And maybe I'll find one. Why wouldn't I laugh?"

She got to her feet and he rose with her. He could see her vaguely, darker against the dark. She was slim and apparently well-built.

"Don't forget my address, and my name—oh, I didn't tell you that. It's Sue—Sue Jones—care of Giluley."

"Sue Jones, care of Giluley," he echoed.

"And what's your name?"

"Michael—"

"Oh, Irish! In and out of luck like me. What's your last name?"

He told her with a little fear that she might feel its importance. But it meant nothing to her.

She stuffed the money in her jacket pocket, gave him both her hands and said:

"They say God loves the Irish. I certainly do this night. Good-by, Mike Crelin."

"Good-by, Sue Jones."

Their hands succeeded in saying much with a limited vocabulary of clenching and clenching again. Then she left him and her shadow was drowned in the ink of the night.

He lingered awhile, marveling at the encounter. Suddenly he remembered his mother and their guests. He hurried back to the house.

He had to pause to study the ballroom. It was in complete contrast with what he had just seen—or not seen. In place of a shadowy soul, hungry, forlorn, at bay with the wolf, seeking shelter in a public park, he saw a jostling mob of women in such splendor that almost the least of their jewels would have kept Sue Jones in comfort for a year.

She was of the dark and these people were creatures of the light, motes in the sun. They were beautiful, kind, joyous, lovable, no doubt. But they had cast off mystery. Sue Jones had nothing else.

His mother found him. "Where on earth have you been?"

He was inspired to answer: "Hiding out with a gal."

Her face was suffused with joy. The ball was a success already. She tapped his cheek with her fan and whispered: "Who is she?"

"Don't you wish you knew!"

That also was promising. She moved off, ponderously elated.

The last guests lingered on and on and Michael slept so late the next day that his breakfast came almost at tea time. He told his mother that he would not be home to dinner and this raised her hope still higher.

He dined early at a club and was climbing the stairs to the Giluley door at eight o'clock. The tenement was dingy but clean, and Sue Jones was waiting for him at the landing.

He saw feet at the head of the stairs and assumed them to be hers. He had never been more afraid to meet anyone. What would her face be like? In a fairy story she would be angelically beautiful. But this was harsh fact.

How would she greet him? He did not expect blank verse, but he was dazed to find her angry. First he heard her voice above him:

"Is that you, Mr. Crelin?"

"It's me, Miss Jones."

"Well, what did you mean by givin' me nearly two hundred dollars when I only asked for ten?"

"Oh, was there that much? It was so dark I couldn't see. Well, did you buy yourself a yacht with it?"

"It's all here, and I want you to take it."

Instead of a clasp of hands she seized his wrist and forced into his palm a wad of bills.

He looked up at her with a smile that died at once. He saw her for the first time. She was perplexed and suspicious, but very human.

She was by no means beautiful, not even pretty. Yet she was intensely real, earnest, passionately alive. She was saying:

"Mrs. Giluley took me in. This morning I was out and I landed a job—a good one, too. And I asked 'em for an advance of five dollars, so I can pay you all I owe you."

"But I don't want this. Keep it—all of it."

"I couldn't. I wouldn't. Please don't try to make me take it. I'm just as much obliged, but I couldn't touch it, honestly. It was mighty sweet of you, and I'll pray for you every night. I did last night."

"Thanks ever so much. I think I felt it. I slept for ten hours. Well, can't we have a little talk?"

"Of course. Mrs. Giluley wants to meet you. I'll call her out."

"Then will you go for a ride with me?"

"A ride? You're rich, ain't you?"

"I suppose I am—financially; but that's no credit to me—and no blame. I didn't earn it, so you'll have to forgive me. Will you come for a little ride?"

"You don't want to be seen with me—a plain workin' girl in worn-out clothes."

"I'd be delighted, really—"

"I'm straight. I—you don't want to go ridin' with me."

"Oh, but I do. We can't part like this."

She yielded more to the hungry appeal in his eyes than to any longing for adventure. She called out Mrs. Giluley to talk to him while she put on her hat and coat.

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Mrs. Giluley was a lean, sad, life-whipped starveling with a retinue of children. Her eyes bored holes in Michael's but he stared back at them with a Sir Galahad serenity. He had not the faintest desire for Sue Jones, and his motives were a blend of benevolence and curiosity. He merely wanted to know more of this person he had rescued.

"You're a grand gentleman," Mrs. Giluley confessed, "to be helping the poor girl like you done. She's a grand girl, too, honest, hard-workin' and clean. You'll not be forgettin' that?"

"If I should, I am sure she would remind me of it."

Mrs. Giluley cackled, "She sure would. Didn't she give one fresh lad a bush in the snoot for crowdin' her on the stairs?"

Michael laughed with the howling of the children, and said: "Thanks for the tip, Mrs. Giluley. I'm very tender in the snoot."

"They tell me there does do crowdin' in the taxicabs, though I've never rode in wan only for bein' took to the hospital once—though of course, there was the funerals. I've been on a plenty of them rides."

"There's always a plenty of funerals, Mrs. Giluley," said Michael. "That's one of the reasons I thought I'd like to help Miss Jones to a taste of life before she went to her own."

Mrs. Giluley's scrawny hand came out and crunched his arm. "God love you for that thought. And as long as you're honest, a bit of crowdin' in a taxicab would be no sin. Too much of it is more than enough, but a taste of it—ochone, a taste of it is but sugar to your tay."

Then Sue came out and Michael followed her down the stairs after giving Mrs. Giluley the very same bow he used when presented to the greatest of ladies.

With Sue, however, he was as horribly embarrassed as she was with him. They picked their way along the crowded street to an avenue under the elevated, where he stopped a north-bound taxicab.

He told the driver: "Through Central Park, out Riverside, round Grant's Tomb and back through the park."

They were both strangers and ill at ease while the cab shot and slowed through a tunnel of flashing lights. When they reached the park and the trees closed them in, they were old friends once more.

She was only a soul again, and it gave him a sense of deity to help her. Last night he had saved her from famine and despair. She was his creature by right of purchase from death. She was his creation, his child.

Now like an indulgent god he wanted to heap blessings on her. He tried to tell her all this. It was not easy. Her response endeared her to him.

"There's so many that's sick and old and feeble-minded. It's them you ought to help first."

"But I can't begin to help everybody, even a little, so I'd like to help somebody a lot. It would make me tremendously happy to take you out of that sickening tenement and these pitiful clothes and your hard work. Just feel those hands."

He caught them and passed his own over them. She was ashamed of them and would have snatched them away, but he held them.

"Let me make your hands soft and give them rest—or pretty things to do. I'd like to see you sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, and have a hand-bag stuffed with money to spend as you like."

"If I had money, I'd send it home to Oswego and help my poor mother and my sisters and brothers."

"I'll give you what you want for that."

"Yes, and if I sent it to them, they'd think I'd gone wrong. They wouldn't take it. They're proud." Suddenly she was weeping again, as he had first heard her in the dark: "Huh-huh-huh-huh."

"What are you crying about now?"

"I'm thinkin' what my mother could do with a hundred dollars!"

"You darling!"

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He drew her into his arms and kissed her on the cheek. She could not fight in her deep woe. Once he had her, it was easier to keep her there than release her. She sank back against him with a profound sigh:

"Oh, it's nice to have somebody to lean on. But—oh, don't make me bad, don't—don't lead me into temptation!"

Michael vowed that he would never be so vile a fiend.

The rain that had threatened them the night before, began now and shut them in a little room with swishing silken walls. The rain frightened Sue. She might have resisted Michael's plan in the opulence of a warm blue moonlit world, with ecstasy in every breath of air and the promise of eternal bliss; but the rain was sharp and cold and reminded her that her shoes were thin and she had no rubbers, no umbrella, no warm coat, no protection from the dank of poverty anywhere but in these strong arms of this angel from heaven.

She had strength only to say that she must ask Mrs. Giluley's advice. Michael made an inventory of the things he would do for her and urged her to mention them to Mrs. Giluley.

It was as much of a miracle to him as it was to Sue Jones. Michael was writing a Cinderella story of his own, and casting himself in the dual rôle of the old witch who turned a pumpkin into a town-car and the prince who benefited by the romance.

When on the next night he called again, Mrs. Giluley delivered this opinion:

"If I was not Irish, I'd be sayin' to Susie here, 'Don't you believe it; it's impossible.' But bein' what I am, a Joyce and of royal blood, I say, 'There's much truth in drames. They doob be comin' thru, both bad and good. It's the fairies is in it. Thim People doos it!'

"I'm afther tellin' Susie that she need not be afraid of you, or herself, or bein' rich. Manny and manny's the gerl I've seen go wrong because of poverty. I've niver seen anny go wrong because of too much money, because too much money's a thing I've niver boomed up against.

"Susie'd be a fool to fight good fortune. I think you're crazy, Michael Crellin, but if you mane harm to her she has two strong fists and a pair of legs to run with. So take her and put her in a palace as big as the Grand Cinthral Station or Bellvoo Hospital, for all of me. It may encourage others to do the like by other gerls."

So Michael took Sue away and they rode about looking for a place for her. It was none too easy to find an apartment-house that was honest enough to be trusted and not too inquisitive. It was none too easy for Michael to keep himself out of it, for he knew that his name drew reporters as anise-seed draws fox-hounds, and he had no desire to be known in the matter.

In a trance, Sue obeyed his orders, engaged a maid, bought clothes, books, food, what she wished. He made her go to beauty parlors and cultivate herself like a flower-garden.

To the worst artist his own work is wonderful, and to Michael, Sue Jones was a masterpiece. It is the creation that makes the creator a creator.

Michael taught Sue pride and good manners, dainty snobberies and smart mannerisms, and found her so apt at imitation that it fascinated him to train her for the day when she would be well-schooled enough to be taken to a hotel for tea and introduced as the Countess Oswega. He began to like her so well that he dramatized the day when he would try to palm her off on his own mother.

He and Sue promised each other a thousand times that they would be terribly proper, since, of course, marriage was out of the question. Or was it? Well, it was impossible for a long time, anyway.

But nature has her own way, as a rule. Michael's money could do many things contrary to human custom, but he could not love Sue and not love her. She could not worship him and not worship him.

The inevitable happened. There was rapture, then remorse. Repentance, then more repentance. Promises and noble resolutions and then new promises to replace the breakage.

And by and by, of course, there fell a day when Sue disclosed to Michael the oldest secret in the world. She was not original. She wept the ancient tears and hid her head.

Michael did not hesitate a moment about proffering marriage. He dropped to his knees and proposed, and she refused him until he explained that it was not merely their own private affair any longer.

His mother would have been pleased to see that ironic granting of her ancient prayer! She had pleaded for a grandchild and her prayer had been heard.

When Sue had been lifted from her panic to realize that to all her other gifts were to be added a child, an honorable name, and a husband who loved her and was infinitely rich, she mumbled: "Why is God so good to me?"

It is well to say that when one is in the mood, for there come times when it is not easy to say and there are other questions to ask.

Michael's first plan was to hurry to the license bureau early the next morning. When he left Sue he warned her to be ready in time.

He walked home through the kindly night, and the enormous city seemed to brood over its millions of children in vast motherhood.

And now he was a father. He was to be that plain old-fashioned thing, a daddy, a papa, a happy fool leaning over a cradle.

For the first time he was his mother's son. He understood the vague cry of unborn posterity. He wanted to muster Crellins out of the future. He was a Crellin at last.

Mingled with these big vagaries was a new love for Sue Jones—"Mrs. Crellin," he corrected himself. She who had never been pretty even in his lover's eyes was suddenly the most beautiful of women. And Sue was worthy of the high prerogative of being a Crellin. She had been honest and she had been brave. He was proud of her. The Crellins would always be proud of her since they would be the children of her courage, her honesty, and her love.

He fell asleep planning the career of this new Crellin.

But in the morning, on his breakfast table he found the morning papers and on the front page of all of them was the picture of a prominent gentleman whose hidden "romance" with a young woman of theatrical obscurity had just been announced, and their secret marriage "bared." "Bared" was the newspaper word. There was also a delicate reference to the approaching visit of "the stork." "Stork" is now a word for grown-ups. It set Michael to counting on his fingers.

It occurred at once to Michael that his own name and his bride's would not lack for attention. A reporter had once told him: "You are always front-page material, Mr. Crellin."

He looked up to see that his mother, who was reading another paper, was also counting on her fingers. She gasped with disgust:

"Did you see this about Thornton Eccles?"

"Yes."

"Loathsome! Oh, my boy, beware of these women, these designing creatures of the underworld that prey on a man's sympathy. And by the way, when are you going to get married?"

One of those rare inspirations of his came to him and he answered without a moment's hesitation: "I've looked the ground over pretty well, Mama; and I have an idea that I'd better take a glance abroad first. I'm going across at once." She was horrified and terrified, but he said: "There's nobody I'd look at a second time over here. It's the only way."

She had to yield, and he dashed off, leaving her convinced that the Crellin line was doomed.

Michael made haste to find Sue and tell her his glorious scheme. They would take the first ship to Europe. They would be strangers. They would meet on deck by accident. He would be infatuated with her—conspicuously



By Peggy Hoyt

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so. They would meet again in London, again in Paris, and be married in some obscure little village. They would date the marriage back in their quiet announcements and disappear on a tour round the world.

The Crellin heir would be born wherever it was born and be brought home in state to all the honors of the line. If it were a girl, the next one would be a boy, or the next.

His enthusiasm fired Sue, too, and they paid no heed to the dangerous gaps in their plot.

The first thing was to dart away to a steamship office and book the passage for himself, make inquiries and scout about so that Sue could go to the same office and engage another stateroom, one of the best, so fine a one that she would be accepted without question as the heiress of some oil man or something.

They laughed and hugged and parted and she waved to him from her window. And he crossed the street, waving to her with such adoration that he was all but run over by a scooting taxicab and she all but fell out of the window in terror.

But he escaped the danger and reached the opposite curb, laughing, walked a few blocks and took a cab as he always did to cover his tracks.

And this cab, swinging cheerily through a narrowing gap between a pillar of the elevated railroad and a gigantic truck, was crumpled and smashed together with a loud clangor. And Michael's body was crushed like a wicker birdcage. His soul was the bird within it and his death ended the song in the hearts of two women, whose only likeness was that to both of them Michael was everything bright and beautiful in the world.

In the indescribable débris they found papers identifying the passenger as Michael Crellin. So he got on the front page again.

Even the police and the reporters approached Mrs. Crellin cautiously, and the news was broken to her as gently as such news can be broken. Her heart died in her and she sat in a swoon with her eyes open but blank.

She would let no one see her when at last the tears began to seep into her eyes, but locked herself in her room, mourning her son, and also all the families that died in him.

The news broke for Sue Jones in the headlines of the evening papers. The new elevator boy in her apartment-house did not know that the Mr. Brown who called on her so often was Mrs. Crellin and he dropped the evening paper at her door with no thought of what it meant.

Expecting Michael, she did not even glance at it when at last she took it in, and she took it in only when she went to the door to look out and wonder if he could not be in the hall, he was so late.

She never dared to telephone to him, and she always worried and worried. She always was sure when he was late that he had been killed in a street accident.

At last she took up the paper and flung herself into a chair to read it as a drug to her nerves. She glanced carelessly at the headlines. Her eyes nearly broke from her head. Her tenantless body rolled off to the rug.

When she came back from wherever she had been, she lay on the floor reading the news over and over again, rubbing her eyes in disbelief, pounding the rug aimlessly, gasping for breath as if she would suffocate in a world whence all the air was gone. She was back in the deep night where she had been when she rolled on the grass and wondered how she could live. Only then she had never known Michael or imagined such a heaven as she had been lifted to in order that she might fall the farther.

After long hours of anguish, the tears came. And she sobbed, and rolled, clenched and unclenched her hands, and reached out for Michael, calling his name endlessly, all night. It was her first great sorrow.

All night another woman, an old woman who had known many sorrows and often been visited by death, felt as if this were her first real sorrow. She wept and flung her hands out, too, calling Michael by name.

But he did not answer. He could not. He



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could not even tell the two who loved him of each other. He could not ask either to help the other and lay aside their natural enmity in their common woe.

It was weeks later before the butler even mentioned the name of a caller to Mrs. Crellin. She crouched in her upper den like an old lioness with an arrow through her, dying in her own way, unapproachable and terrible.

Eventually, as people somehow do, Mrs. Crellin came out of her cavern. The arrow was still in her heart, but the outer wounds were healed over. She would not see anybody except her lawyer.

The Crellin estate was the final sarcasm. There was nobody to leave it to. In a grim contempt of every opportunity to make other people happy, she resolved to let it lie in the vaults and accumulate as it would.

One day as Mrs. Crellin came home from a long drive in her closed car, she found at the door a young woman whom the butler had been trying in vain to dismiss. Mrs. Crellin made to pass by her, but the girl said:

"Please, ma'am, may I have a word with you?"

"Do I know you?"

"No, ma'am. But I was a friend of Michael's."

The name shook the old woman. She winced and glared, and sighed: "He had so many friends that I couldn't know them all. You will have to excuse me. I am very tired."

"You better see me, ma'am. You got a right to see me."

The butler started to thrust Sue away: "Really, miss, I must ask you——"

"Don't you touch me! Mrs. Crellin, I'm telling you, you'd better see me. Michael would want you to see me."

That made the old woman reel. She nodded to the butler to admit the girl and led the way to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Crellin paused and said: "Well?"

Sue stared back and remembering suddenly the imitations she had been trained to give, aped a swell as best she could and said:

"Really, Mrs. Crellin, I would as soon have a chat with you in a railroad station as here. What I have to say is strictly confidential."

Mrs. Crellin saw through the bad acting, but yielded to the advice of discretion. She took Sue into what had been her husband's office and library, closed the door, and invited the lightning with a defiant: "Well?"

Sue was suddenly afraid, not of Mrs. Crellin, but of her own plight.

"My name is Sue Jones. Michael loved me. I loved him. I love him. Wherever he is, he loves me now. He—I suppose you would say—he kept me."

Mrs. Crellin's head went up like a fierce eagle's. "You dare come to me and defile the memory of my son!"

"I'm not defiling his memory. There was nothing defiling about Michael."

"No, and I will permit no one to slander him. Perhaps he may have—he was a man—I don't know—but he—he had planned to be married——"

"Yes, to me. He was going to marry me."

"That's a lie. He told me the day he was killed that there was nobody in this country he would marry. He was going abroad."

"Yes, with me. We were to get married over there."

This was so palpably ridiculous that Mrs. Crellin laughed. "Married! My son marry you!—a—a— You're ludicrous, young woman. What are you looking for—money?"

"Yes, I—I suppose I am, kind of. You see Michael gave me all I needed, but he didn't make any provision for me."

"And you expect me to do what he didn't see fit to do himself. Really, miss?"

"But Michael was going to marry me, you see. I wouldn't mind on my own account. I could always work and earn my way. But now I—I can't work—I oughtn't to work at anything very hard because if—well, you understand, don't you?"

Mrs. Crellin glared at her and understood clearly enough what she meant. But the thought was too hateful to believe. Her family had so often been threatened by swindlers that she suspected everyone.

"You have the impudence to break in on my grief, traduce my dead son with a filthy lie, and demand hush-money?"

"Oh, not hush-money, Mrs. Crellin. It's not for me. I don't want any money. It's for the baby, Michael's baby. I could take care of him, kind of, but never in the way he ought to be taken care of. He's a Crellin, you know, and you wouldn't want me to raise him in a tenement—not Michael's baby."

"Say that again, and I'll——" She raised her hands like claws over Sue's head. "You foul-tongued little fool. Do you think you can levy blackmail on me, you criminal? I don't believe you're going to have a child or that Michael ever knew you. If you are, and if he did, then someone else—dozens of others, no doubt—are responsible for your shame. Try to blackmail me, miss, and I'll turn you over to the police."

She bent across a great carved desk, found an electric button, and pressed it.

"Now get out!"

Sue had cowered before, not in fear of her so much as in fear of the frightful things she said, but now her own wrath flared up at last.

"You can't understand. You're too old and hard to imagine how Michael and I loved each other. It was white and pure to us, but I guess the rest of the world would think just what you do of me. They'd call my baby what you think—if it ever lived. But it's not going to live. Neither am I. I don't want to live without Michael."

"Cheap talk! You can't bluff me. Go on, kill yourself if you want to. I'm not going to try to stop you. It would be good riddance of cheap rubbish."

"Cheap rubbish, maybe, as far as I'm concerned. But when you read about a dead girl named Sue Jones being found, just remember this, Mrs. Crellin: Part of that girl, part of me, is part of you. You're sending me to my death easy enough, but some day you may wake up and realize that when you killed me, you killed Michael's baby, you murdered your own grandchild."

Mrs. Crellin was in such a frenzy of hatred that she hardly heard the girl's words. When the butler opened the door, she snarled:

"Show this young woman out."

Sue went meekly enough, crossed the great drawing-room with a hungry stare at its splendors, passed through the high marble hall, let her eyes mount the vast stairway till tears blinded her; for she imagined Michael climbing, climbing.

She bent her head, and when the butler swung wide the big door, slunk through it like a beaten dog.

Mrs. Crellin sank into a chair, breathing as hard as if she had been running. She heard herself muttering:

"Blackmailer! Maligning my poor boy in his grave! Oh, the ghouls!—his child—that little plebeian—my grandchild! 'When you killed me, you killed your own grandchild,' she said."

She laughed like a weary maniac. Suddenly she choked. She was petrified by the thought: "What if—what if— Married or unmarried, the blood of the Crellins might be—it might be—it might be——"

She heaved herself to her feet, staggered to the door, screaming the butler's name. He appeared before her. She cried to him:

"That girl—that girl who was here—find her! Stop her! Bring her back! Quick!"

The butler ran to the door, threw it open. She followed him out on the steps. He stared this way and that, then ran south, barcheaded, peering at everybody in the crowd. The people walking and riding wondered at the frantic old woman at the door of the big house.

A second man ran out of the house. Mrs. Crellin sent him north. A chauffeur appeared

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in the areaway. She sent him flying, describing the girl as best she could.

She stood there until her servants had come back at last from their futile search.

Then she went into the house, with the guilt of a murderer on her soul. She had killed her son's son. She had by her own heartlessness ended the line.

Her faith in the girl's story was as unquestioning now as her disbelief had been before. She had not even learned the girl's name. Yes, she had. The girl said her name was—what?

If she could remember it, how could she find her? The girl would have gone to either of the rivers, or she would hurl herself in front of a subway train, or from a high building—there were so many ways!

She shivered and maudered and prayed. She knew now what abject poverty meant. She was as helpless as Sue Jones had been. Sue Jones was as necessary to her salvation as Michael had been to Sue Jones.

After a long vague while, the butler came to her. "The young woman is on the phone, ma'am, asking for you. I knew her voice."

Mrs. Crellin hurried to the library and sank into a chair. Her trembling hand could hardly hold the receiver. From some place in the vast city came a frail thread of voice:

"This is me. You remember? The girl that just called on you. Michael's—mistress, you might say. I came home to make ready to—you know, and I realized that there's a lot of trinkets and things of Michael's here. If the police found them—they'd mix his name up with mine. I've kept it out so far, but afterward, maybe I couldn't."

"I've made a bundle of everything that was his. I'm sending it by messenger before I—I wanted you to know what it was. That's all."

Mrs. Crellin, who had been whispering "Yes, yes" at every pause in Sue's phrases, broke out:

"Oh, my child, wait, wait! I believe you. I want you. I'll come for you, if you'll only wait. You belong to me now—now that Michael is gone. And you and I must take care of—oh, you understand. Promise me you'll wait at least till I can get to you. Forgive me, my child, my dear daughter, and wait, won't you?"

A faint "Yes, ma'am," was her answer.

And so Sue, the bewildered little shuttlecock of strange battletocks, came to live in the Crellin palace. Mrs. Crellin talked to the old family lawyer, and though he was ferociously virtuous, he consented to devise a most outrageous plot against the sanctity of the law and the chastity of the records.

He was inspired by some devil to imagine that in some small town of the big state it would be possible to find an official who could be induced by a sufficient cash consideration to slip into the files a record carefully dated back revealing that a license and a marriage certificate had been granted to Michael Crellin and Sue Jones.

It was cheating, perhaps, but fate had cheated Michael and Michael's mother and Michael's beloved of so much that they felt justified in protecting the innocent oncoming young soldier of the future from being cheated out of his rights.

The announcement of the secret wedding caused a vast amount of ugly gossip and made a flurry in the newspapers. But what did that matter to the Crellins? The line had always attracted attention. The main thing was that it should not perish.

The elder Mrs. Crellin and the younger "Mrs. Crellin" sat together, sewing and sewing and planning and planning. Sue, who had learned to distrust life, wondered aloud:

"What if it should be a girl?"

"It couldn't be! The name of Crellin will carry the blood of the Crellins on forever."

"And we'll name him Michael," said "Mrs. Crellin."

"Michael!" said Mrs. Crellin.

Rembrandt by Emil Ludwig (Continued from page 61)

hostelry where his dreams and his caprices were to be auctioned.

The house in which he had lived for so many years with Saskia and Hendrickje was bought by a cobbler. The traders snatched up his treasures; yet in the end they had brought not 17,000 guilders, but 5,000. Among the last articles to go was Rembrandt's Bible.

Then he stood up and left the hall; and going to his own room, he etched a naked man fallen to the floor. Yet above this man, he showed a phoenix rising.

Incorruptible fate. How loyal to your own principles you are, remaining logical and pure in either cruelty or mercy. Your clarity is perilous. And in your beauty, O Nature, you are without pity.

To test a man, you give him freedom, plying him with gifts, luring him with passions; you go before him, quietly and invisibly, to lay open a winding path through the thicket which he will take seemingly by choice. Yet long before he has become aware of it these little twists and turnings have determined the direction and the outcome of his destiny.

Was the painter to blame if, under the weight of genius, continually impelled by the need of expression to move on from one work to another, he went too far in seeking to protect his measure of beauty and delight? This was his destiny, as determined by his particular endowments and desires.

If he had incurred, with the thoughtlessness of a child, his financial responsibilities and his obligations towards women, he made amends like a sovereign. As he rose up out of dulness into the light, life rushed forth to him; yet it was not until this brilliance had been lost that he felt his way through the wilderness and carried his art to its farthest limits. When he no longer aspired to see this world, the other

was unlocked to him. He perfected his art at the price of his happiness.

An old man was standing in a bare room beside a little stove, warming his raw hands, grown stiff with painting.

Still it felt good to have a few walls about one again, and to know that one could not be driven out! Last year had been a hard one for him, staying in inns and without money. Even now, a year later, the bill at the Keizerskroon was not paid. But the good children had again succeeded in finding a home! Now he at least knew where he could keep his pictures.

For they had now rented a couple of rooms in the Rozengracht. It was a dark street on the edge of the city. But the Jews, his old friends the second-hand dealers, lived here. He was familiar with this atmosphere. If only the light did not enter so coldly through the plain uncurtained windows!

A ring of usurers besieged the old man like a band of hyenas. And now that they had devoured his property, they robbed him of all that his godlike hands might yet create. They sat like ill-omened crows on the roof of the house which was no longer his, creaking of justice and litigation. And this went on for years, even after his death.

There was Cattenburgh, the flashy wine-dealer, house-mover and real estate speculator, who dealt in everything, including genius. Years ago he had lent Rembrandt money, for which Rembrandt had to pledge him pictures of his own and others, and also had to agree to accept commissions. Rembrandt's etching needle made the brother of the dealer immortal. The people at the auction, even the masterful picture of Jan Six, seem to have originated as payment for a debt.

There was Heertsbeek—but let him make up for the others! He once lent Rembrandt

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4,200 guilders, and he now wanted money out of the auction, but Titus' attorney claimed priority. The lawsuit lasted for twelve years. In the end the money went to Titus, the user getting not a single guilder, not even interest, and since the court also made him pay the costs, the thought of it is still a source of satisfaction to artists, after the passing of centuries.

In this trial the witnesses of his former heyday come forward like ghosts, when Rembrandt summons them to testify as to how great Saskia's wealth, to which the son now lays the first claim, had been at that time. After decades, the collections were again appraised.

So the curse of this wealth still raged, thirty years after the consummation of a marriage which made the artist both richer and poorer, ruining him with good fortune.

Titus was loyal and above reproach, as was Hendrickje, his second mother. In these interminable lawsuits, the three learned some of the dealers' sharp practises—and they now hatched up a scheme to eke out a living!

Hendrickje Stoffels—for so Rembrandt's wife must be called to the end—and the nineteen-year-old Titus van Rijn established before the notary "a company trading in pictures, prints, copper and woodcuts, including copies thereof, curios, with all appurtenances . . . Also the management of the house is undertaken equally by the two of them, while the painter Rembrandt van Rijn shall not have the slightest part in this enterprise, nor does he have any claim to household goods, furnishings, art, curios, utensils, or whatever else may be found in their house at any time. Rather, the aforementioned parties retain all claims and prior rights over anyone who might desire to instigate any *actio* or *pretencia* against the aforementioned Rembrandt van Rijn.

"But inasmuch as they need assistance in their business, and inasmuch as no one would be more suitable thereto than the aforementioned Rembrandt van Rijn, they are accordingly agreed that he shall dwell with them and that he shall unconditionally be given bed and board without cost, and that he shall assist them in every way. Also, everything which he shall later acquire will belong to the company.

"Because Rembrandt has gone into bankruptcy and has been forced to part with everything which he once possessed, he has had to rely upon others for support and thus admits to having received from Titus 950 guilders and from Hendrickje 800 guilders, which will return as soon as he has again earned something by painting. As a guaranty of his promise, he had pledged them whatever pictures he henceforth paints in their house, or the return from these."

Beneath these formalities, under this apparently merciless enslavement, do we not detect all the love which impels these two people to commit this sly act in behalf of a third? This is their retaliation against the trickery of others, whom they in turn were tricking.

But Rembrandt no longer belonged on this earth. Even his future paintings were not his own. The man who had once lived in the midst of his remarkable treasures, was now left with nothing but the coat he wore and the brush he wielded. The miller's son, who was once a prince, had become Rembrandt the beggar.

Yet in the mastery of his art the beggar was a sovereign. The phoenix which he had depicted rising above the fallen body mounted in great spirals into ever purer, more ethereal spheres.

He now laid aside the etching needle which had been his companion for forty years, and which he had particularly turned to of late. His eyes, it seems, were overtired from this delicate work and were no longer equal to the strain. Also, his drawings now tended to become rough sketches.

Since he often lacked money for drawing-paper or portfolios, he would seize the nearest thing at hand, and posterity may see the adulteress sketched on one side of a sheet while on the other the addressee is invited to attend the funeral of Madam Nachtglas.

It is only in the single pictures of this decade that he gains total freedom as poet and painter. For the most part his subjects (sitters) are elderly men and women, and when they seem young in years they are old in spirit. They now no longer face the world with demands or questions, but only with a sinister understanding. Yet their melancholy is covered by a gleam of color never seen before.

For at the end of his life, Rembrandt the magician, Rembrandt the believer in Light, had bid this super-real light a touching farewell, and had now for the first time devoted himself wholly to color, which heretofore he had subordinated to the effects of light and shade. So long as his own dull struggle with himself had continued, he had imagined himself abandoned by God and had cast his figures into the twilight of his own mind. With his habitual honesty, he did not impart to these creatures of his imagination his godly half alone; he forced them into the dual world of the ego, permitting one small area, one single spot, to gleam with the light of supermundane suns, while the greater mass was left enshrouded in shadow.

But now, as an old man and a beggar, he gained confidence and let the colors of this earth shimmer on his figures.

For these are but color dreams which he paints. All but two subjects are taken from the Bible. Twice more he paints conflict and anger: as Moses flings the tablets of stone against the rocks in disillusionment; as Jacob he struggles with the angel, a conflict between black and extreme light which had preoccupied him since his youth.

Five times Rembrandt has represented Christ at Emmaus. In the first picture, painted in his youth, we see the head of a black magician posed with such scenic haughtiness that the disciples are terrified. Around thirty, he has a long-haired prophet in a column of light, with uplifted eyes and an expression of pain. In two pictures done in his early forties, he has the Master at the table looking towards heaven, though diverting the attention to a servant in one instance and to two highly illumined women in the other, thus interrupting the moment of recognition. Towards fifty he hurled the disciples back from the brilliant light in terror. But now, as an old man, he was able to cast everything into a quiet melody of white and yellow; the process of recognition takes place simply and undramatically, almost dumbly.

Some of these last figures seem more like statues than *dramatis personæ*, about resembling idols, in fact. And they are awakened to life solely by their color, which should serve to restore to the aging man his freshness, as young Hendrickje had done in earlier years. The colors are applied sculpturally, with the handle of the brush, almost as though with a trowel. They are laid upon the garments of his characters so profusely that we could reach out a hand and touch positive mounds of them.

On the wall of a barren room there hung a little mirror. It was tarnished, and perhaps had one corner broken away, like the mirror in the mill years before. The man who had watched his reflection in the earlier one could hardly have been recognized by the man who was watching his reflection now. His brilliance and gallantry had long since vanished with his youth; but he felt a demoniac urge now to picture himself with all those very furrows and afflictions of old age which had always attracted him most in others. Rembrandt had made fourteen paintings of himself in the last ten years, all of them life-size, and each more touching than the ones that had preceded it.

He painted himself representatively only once more. For the first time, Rembrandt impersonated what he actually was, a painter. Nearing sixty, he stands before us in a dark red coat, his bald pate covered by a white cap. In the bloated, wrinkled features we read the record of his trials and disappointments; yet he remains erect, is still a man.

Titus meanwhile had also become a man,

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with a little mustache in addition to his feminine curls—and his beauty is like something too frail for this world. He is maturing rapidly; and now, between the ages of seventeen and twenty, he already seems ripe for death.

Hendrickje was still young and lovable. As evidence of how charming and patient she has remained, there are some drawings and etchings, particularly one of the latest things Rembrandt etched. Also the faun is still asserted in him at times, as the Antiope testifies. Yes, Hendrickje is still beautiful, but her eyes have become more weared. She is still wearing whatever they had salvaged when everything collapsed. She has pearls in her ears and on her arm—Saskia's pearls.

How quietly the three of them lived. Or rather, the four, for now her daughter Cornelia is also slowly growing up. But where are the friends, few as they were?

It was said that Rembrandt did not act "fairly" in money matters, and that is indeed the case. Rembrandt was a bankrupt, who had a child by a maid outside of wedlock, and he lived in a dark hole on the edge of the city. It occurred to no one to rescue him from this bondage of debt.

People did not care to buy his pictures, for they were sketchy and eccentric; meanwhile his pupils Dou and Flinck were receiving as much as 1,000 guilders for their works. This did credit to his name, but it was like the honor accorded to an artist after his death. Now even a Susanna "from his good period" was sold at an advance over its earlier price; and while he was living in neglect and obscurity, Rembrandt was named in a eulogy of Amsterdam as the Apelles of his time.

"This was all wrong, and it would never be otherwise."

Hendrickje expired, as Saskia had expired—no one knows of what. But just before her death the man who as companion and painter had molded her destiny, copied her once more. And just as Saskia had done before her, she signals her leave-taking to him and to posterity with eyes which are deep and weighted with tragedy. At that, she must pose in her dark green dress as Venus; and the child whom she is fondling, Cornelia in the little golden shirt, has bright wings, and must play Eros.

What an hour; what must have been the feelings of this parentless maid who, at the end of a brief rich life, just entering her thirties, living in this barren room, beset with worries, was called upon to represent the goddess of love, when she had all her life been the servant of her love!

Her humble will attests her unbounded faith in Rembrandt and her strong attachment to Titus. And in the very midst of the legalistic jargon her feelings towards the father of her child are once more touchingly revealed as she names Rembrandt van Rijn. Cornelia's guardian and expresses her "friendly hopes that he will accept."

She died. And since he had purchased a grave at Saskia's death, he now sold this grave of his first wife in order to bury the second. Since he needed one near by in the Wester Kerk, there was nothing left for the beggar to do but to obtain the one with the other.

With this gruesome trade Rembrandt's love story is ended.

As Cornelia grew up beside her brother, for seven years she took Hendrickje's place in caring for the father. These two repaid with simple affection their father's goodness, which the outside world mistook for harshness.

The son of the genius also felt the urge to paint, and did still lives and images of the Virgin. Still in his twenties, this shell of a man worked at his last pictures like a person of forty. In this final stage of his mental and bodily exhaustion, he found a bride. Her parents could tell her of better days in this house, for Magdalena's mother had seen the pearls on Saskia's gorgeous neck thirty years ago and had sworn to this at the trial.

Even after he was married, with the responsibility of a child of his own, Titus stood



Photograph by Alfred Cheney Johnston showing how Miss Hopper looks today.

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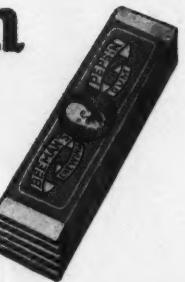
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W. H. Guscott, Ohio,
earned \$300 in a single month.

security for his father with one of the usurers.

Yet at the same time the father also stood security for him, after his fashion. One of his last, and greatest, pictures represents Titus with his bride, though strangely enough it has gone down through the centuries as the "Jewish Bride." Here Rembrandt's old greenish gold pours over the man once more; but his high red, new and rousing, falls upon the girl, becoming sharpest upon her breast. Every article of dress in this picture, including chains and jewelry, is glowing and flaming. Yet the erotic intensity of the unbridled father from whom this frail young man has descended is transformed into a gentle tenderness, into the seduction of an effeminate son who is laying his large hand on his wife's breast and groping for her heart. Here is a weaker generation desirous of founding a third; and the old connoisseur of souls now also sees, beyond delight and charm, the end of his race.

A few months afterwards Titus sank down, another victim of premature decline.

Rembrandt survived his son by a year. His daughter-in-law remained aloof from him. She brought a posthumous daughter into the world, but they did not live with him, and he rarely saw her. So far as the old man was concerned, Saskia's race seemed extinct.

Saskia herself appeared to him in a dream. For his last "Family Picture," so called, was not painted from life. He poses Saskia, in the brick-red of his final period, alongside Titus, who seems old enough to pass as her husband. The three children whom they lost as infants sit next them, with rigid features. None of them is looking at the others. Morbidly and knowingly, the father bids them peer across at him, out of the Beyond which he himself hopes soon to find. Frightful epilog to a poet's destiny; death dance of five primly seated, coldly ornamented people who, from over yonder, are arranging a rendezvous with father and husband.

Cornelia alone still moved about him. She was nearly sixteen. Perhaps she was beautiful; we do not know, as he no longer painted her. He was merely tarrying in this external world. He seems to have taken to drink, for his face has become more and more bloated, and his eyes are heavy. Occasionally, when he has no money, he serves as a witness for his neighbors if there is some paper to be signed. Poor people were always used for this, as it gave them an opportunity to earn half a guilder.

Once he went to the studio of his pupil Fabritius, who wanted to paint the decapitation of John the Baptist and needed some coarse, repulsive person for his headsman. Here the master presents himself, with sleeves and collar loose, a hairy chest, the ax in his hands, standing as model for his pupil. How he smirks, while the young man artfully winds the turban for Herod and introduces jewels and a "supernatural light"!

Now the sitting was over. Rembrandt had earned his guilders and went trudging home. Then of a sudden he remembered the mill, and he was filled with an enormous yearning. He was homesick, after this too protracted pilgrimage. So he stepped up to his old easel and painted the legend of the lost son. Now for the first time he, who had always followed the words of the Bible scrupulously, took liberties with the holy text, translating the whole into a realm of greater silence.

Now the father no longer runs to him; he is blind. Ragged, in coarse garments which still show a few bright fine remnants of better times, and with the head of a convict, Rembrandt the beggar returns home to his tottering father. The father wears the yellow coat with the red mantle and the green cap; he has waited for years; now he holds out trembling hands to him and draws him to his breast. The picture is on fire. Yet here too neither person sees the other any longer—they are groping. But are they seen; three mysterious figures are looking on.

Are they mere people, or are they prophets, this old man with the staff, the lame one with the barret, and the ageless woman? But far

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in the background a second woman is coming from the peat bog. It is she, surely, who will invite the returned prodigal to the feast. But in the end Rembrandt laughed with a toothless laugh at fate.

When the painter skulked once more before the broken mirror and observed that reflection which had meant magic to him throughout his life, he laughed over the tricks of a destiny in which he had once had confidence. Smirking, he was impelled to copy once more these features which had already been copied a hundred times. He wrapped a soiled, greenish-yellow shawl about him; simpering, he hung a ribbon around his neck, and fastened to it the large gold ring which had once been worn by his wife. He even added an earring.

He paints one corner of a picture which seems to represent a Roman emperor. Yet when he holds up the mahlstick against it, as if he wanted to paint on the picture within the picture, it is as though he were overturning the emperor and his realm with this stick—and he laughs at this funny notion; from beneath his white cap he laughs at the grotesqueness of life, while his face is covered with wrinkles, which he paints reverently to the last.

So Rembrandt's pilgrimage was ended.

The day in October when he died, his daughter-in-law entered the house in excitement; but she could not speak with Cornelia, who was sitting beside the deceased, and was his only mourner. Magdalena asked a neighbor whether there was any money in the cash-box. The old lady shook her head: the painter had told her he had been living on Cornelia's money for some time. Then the young woman went through the house shouting, "I certainly hope not. I hope her father didn't use Cornelia's money, for half of it belongs to me!"

But she had also sent for a notary, since this Cornelia was not to be trusted. When he arrived, she opened the purse in his presence and took out 170 guilders. For that at least was her half, and the deceased Titus still had old rights to the money, as was stated in the contracts which were drawn up on the basis of Saskia's will.

So the curse of the money now knocked at the death chamber of the beggar. And that he was a beggar the notary would forthwith bear witness; for now as he took up each item and sealed it, he noted that none of these things had been owned by the dead man. Rembrandt's only belongings were "his clothes, 8 handkerchiefs, 10 caps, 1 Bible and the artist's implements."

No one in this house, no one in the whole world, knew at this hour that the old dead painter there with this Bible and his artist's implements had painted and etched a thousand sand pictures and drawn over a thousand more.

They were merely haggling as to whether they should pay for the burial, and did not agree to do so until assured that this expenditure would be made good out of the inheritance. Further, it was but a few steps to the Wester cemetery, but right near this end of the Rosen-gracht where they lived was the Labyrinth; and today was Sunday, and there was singing and fiddling there. It was raining; no one knows who may have accompanied the corpse.

The sexton wrote in his record of burials:

8 October 1669, Rembrandt van Rijn, painter from the Rosengracht. Coffin with case, 16 bearers. Survived by 2 children.

20 guilders.

The malicious sister-in-law died two weeks later. The grandchild was left an orphan.

The following spring Cornelia became engaged, and was soon after married to an industrious man who was a painter as her father had been. Shortly after the wedding they embarked on a sailing vessel bound for the remote and beautiful Dutch colony of Batavia. Three years later, under a happier sun, Cornelia brought a son to the world.

She named him Rembrandt.

THE END

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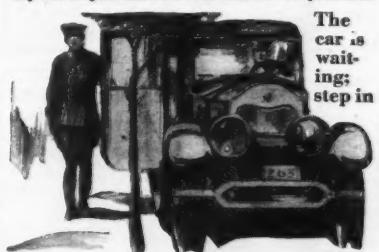
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traditions and manners until I felt that I could start out as an Italian girl would.

Through social affiliations I knew some of the greatest families in Milan, whose slightest word would have cleared many obstacles from my path. But I had not even let them know of my arrival in Milan. I wanted to struggle through it all myself, with the aid of no one. I wish I hadn't now. There is enough to struggle through even with all the aid you can get!

The smoldering-orbed youth announced majestically that he would accompany me to the audition, which little manifestation of camaraderie in art did not please me at all.

We came out into a dark narrow alley, Via San Pietro all'Orto—the street of Saint Peter in the Garden—home of the most important theatrical agencies in Italy, many singers, and the better houses of ill repute.

At the Carcano we were told to wait in the unheated hall of the theater. We waited for an hour. I felt very indignant at this treatment, not realizing how lucky I was that Poli arrived at all. The Italian method of treating an "artist of song" was not at all the way American editors treated authors! When finally the great man arrived and we were told to proceed, I was chilled to the marrow and did not see how one note could sally forth from my shivering frame.

Poli, a tall, burly man wrapped in several overcoats, went to the back of the theater with his secretary and several other men. While I sang the opening of the Mad Scene I could see them wandering about talking to each other and looking anywhere but on the stage.

Just before I came to the climax, the variations at the end which involved runs, trills and a quantity of sustained high notes, the wandering figures suddenly crystallized into sharp attention. Three men, among them Poli, rushed down the center aisle and gazed expectantly into my wide-open mouth.

This made it rather difficult for the novice to do her stuff nonchalantly, and I was so happy when I got to the end of the vocalizing with only a high E-flat which came easily by nature that I heaved an immense sigh of relief, and the E-flat came out on top of the heave with resultant disaster. Lesson number one: Never lean too heavily on your best points.

Laughter welled up from the three men in the orchestra. "She certainly took a good breath there!" Poli remarked. "Never mind, it's all right!" Then he called to me: "You—come back in my office!"

Despite the fact that the invitation had been issued to myself alone, Maestro Villetta poked along. It was then that I got my first clear look at Oreste Poli, one of the most powerful and dominant figures in Italian theatrical life today. In appearance he was more like a middle-aged English man of affairs than an Italian impresario. I had been informed that he was one of the few Italian impresarios who did not bleed singers, who would give a débutante a chance without demanding money in return.

What followed I now realize was like a fairy-story. At the time, with pitifully blissful ignorance, I accepted it all as just reward for my long years of work. While Maestro Villetta's eyes threatened to pop from their sockets, Poli told me that I was "all right," that he was sure I would have a great career and he would launch me upon it. He would not only put me in the theater but he would direct my progress.

In other words, besides being my impresario he would be my agent; an office he had assumed perhaps twice before in his life. Mario would prepare the contract that very day.

I was charmed with the idea. It would be like having, as one's literary agent, the editor of a chain of popular magazines! Poli needed to sell me to no one but himself. I strutted out of the Carcano Theater almost as top-heavily as I had strutted from my publishers'

upon that incomparable day when my first novel was accepted.

I tried not to get the most out of it as I said good-by to the Maestro Villetta and the baritone who had stopped the show at Padua; but after all, it was a wonderful moment.

If I could only have foreseen my next meeting with that baritone!

But, fortunately or not, I could not see into the future. I went back to my hotel and began to spread the news of my triumph among the few students I knew in Milan. No one believed me until they saw the contract which was signed the following day. Then it began to fly all over Milan that an American girl had come from Rome and received a contract from Poli on the day of her arrival.

This excitement had no time to die down before I received a notice from the Carcano Theater to report there immediately.

Poli greeted me with the news that he had arranged for my début. When we signed my contract I had given him my repertoire, from which he had selected "La Traviata" as the opera he thought best suited to my voice. At the moment he had let the Carcano Theater to a lyric society that was giving a season of opera, and Poli had informed them that I was to be their Traviata.

Poli brought in the impresario and presented him to me. He was rather furtive-looking, but full of oily words about how lucky I was to have the interest of a man like Poli and how I'd better never leave him. Later, behind Poli's back he did his best to get me to break my contract with Poli. That wily man of the theater seemed to understand the nature of the man he was dealing with and interrupted the flowery discourse with the remark, addressed to me, that of course I understood that débutantes were never paid anything, but that the management would give me a present if everything went well.

"Everyone will ask you for money," Poli told me. "But you must understand that you are to have no expenses of any kind."

I nodded complacently. I did not know that this was an incredible thing for an Italian impresario to say to an American débutante. However, the oily one's jaw dropped. He left the room hastily, beckoning Poli to follow.

From the corridor there came to me every syllable of the most violent altercation I had ever heard. I could hardly recognize the voice of either man. What? Allow an Americana to début without paying?

Then followed a stream of powerful invective, enriching my somewhat classical Italian vocabulary. Poli came back to me with white face and a set jaw.

"Get out on that stage and sing the *Traviata*," he said tensely. "And for the love of heaven, be calm. I have got to be justified!"

Out on the stage of the Carcano I walked for the second time that week, considerably more nervous than the first. I sang the big aria of "Traviata," ended with a high E-flat unspoiled by any sight of relief.

Signor Mantilla—which was not his name—invited me to come into his office, and Poli took himself away with a triumphant air. I went home bearing a contract for six guaranteed appearances of "Traviata," for which I was to be paid two hundred lire a performance—about ten dollars in American money.

No non-combatant can appreciate what a triumph it was to wrest that sum from an Italian impresario for a début, especially as at first I had been offered to him gratis. Nor did I appreciate it myself, since I had not begun to combat. Instead, I thought of the large sums of money singers are popularly supposed to command, and of how most singers lie about it.

And now the fray was on. In the first place I discovered that all the American students I knew in Milan, and most of those I didn't know, were talking about me very acidly.

A friend told me disconcerting things about the orchestra leader, Maestro Marco—this

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is also a substitute name, for reasons which will become apparent.

"He's known as the most fiendish maestro in Italy," she sighed. "He makes everyone pay to sing and then doesn't let them, if they've paid in advance. Last summer he directed a season in some little town and had forty Americans paying for lessons in the hope he'd let them sing, and not one of them got an appearance."

"What bad voices the forty Americans must have had!" I retorted.

In Italian opera-houses the orchestra leader is god. His word is absolute law. In authority he can even go over the impresario who has engaged him. This gives him a power over the fate of his singers which is very frequently used to extort money from them under the threat that, if they do not come across, he will throw them out.

I knew nothing of this, and wondered why Poli seemed so anxious for me to meet the maestro and sing for him. Together, in Marco's studio, we went over the whole opera. He made me sing the entire four acts through without a moment between any of my parts and then repeat the first two acts again.

I thought this rather an unusual test of vocal resistance, but said nothing. He, too, made no comment until his fingers tired of playing before my voice did of singing. Then he remarked:

"Well, at least you are a musician and you sing on the key. But I want you to know that this is a pretty mean thing Poli is passing off on us. He gives us all the inconvenience of a débutante, he puts on our shoulders the weight of getting you into shape for his big season; he profits by it, you profit by it, we get nothing."

"You get a good Traviata," I responded with what I thought was a light, humorous touch; but the humor did not translate. I remembered my friend had told me that Marco had at least five pupils waiting for him to take their money for a chance at *Traviata*.

But I did not bother even to think how I might remove that scowl from the maestro's face. I was too busy being thrilled by the fact which Marco had just mentioned. Poli had made it known around the theater that I was to appear in his big season at the *Dal Verme* Theater in the fall. Since this was one of the most important seasons in Italy, it naturally would necessitate a great deal of preparation. It was evident that Maestro Marco did not consider it much of an honor to be the first step in this preparation.

When Poli asked me what the maestro thought about my voice I responded faithfully that Marco said I was a musician and sang on the key. Poli seemed rather taken aback, but I had no time to puzzle over the subtleties of operatic cross-currents.

The maestro had wanted to put on "*Traviata*" in four days, but Poli insisted that I be given a week's rehearsals. That was the first and last time I ever had enough rehearsals given me in Italy, and the maestro was so angry at Poli's insistence on my being well prepared that he rehearsed all day every day of that week.

Poli did not appear until the first orchestra rehearsal. As he had let his theater to this lyric society, officially he had nothing to do with the season. While the orchestra was tuning up he told me that it was as important for me to sing well that day as on the night of the performance. The musicians, he said, would spread around whether there was going to be a good *Traviata* or a "dog," which is the epithet Italians reserve for bad singers.

I did my best and was rewarded by a hearty chorus of "*Bravas*" from the orchestra at the end of my big air. I was standing talking to the woman who played the minor part of Flora when Poli favored us with his presence.

"It's going well," he told me.

"Really?" I said with a pleased smile. Abruptly he drew me aside.

"Drawing-room manners don't go in art!" he growled. "When somebody tells you how well



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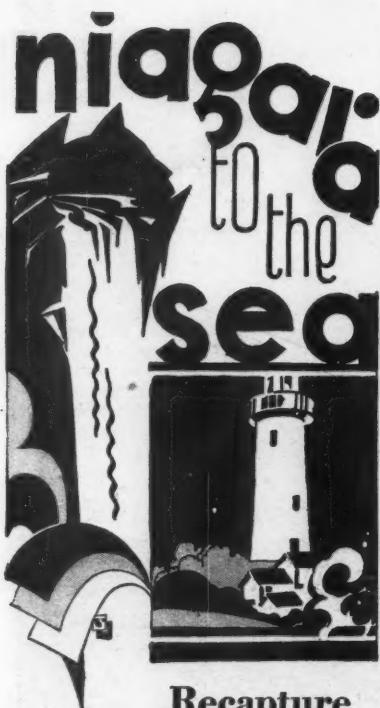
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you are doing, can this pleased-surprise stuff. Accept praise as a just tribute; a prima donna can't afford to be ingenuous!"

At the end of the orchestra rehearsal everyone flocked around to congratulate me. Poli was highly elated, and even Maestro Marco was beaming.

"I have already talked of you to the press," Marco said. "You know, one must always give them something. If you like I will arrange it for you."

I declined this kind offer, at which Marco turned sour with incredible suddenness and began to criticize the emission of my voice with an expert precision of detail that any singing teacher would have envied. Poli came up in time to hear some of it and remarked delicately that if he, Poli, had anything to say about my voice that was one thing, but I was to give ear to no amateur professors.

Maestro Marco shot me a venomous look and left us abruptly. I did not see him again until the night of the dress rehearsal, when we confronted each other across the footlights. His look was still venomous.

When I sang my air at the end of the first act the venom in his look seemed to fly into his baton. There are a number of long high notes in this air, but every time I attacked one he would bring the note to a swift close by the simple method of hurrying the orchestra into the resolution. If you don't hold a high note in Italy it is assumed that you can't.

I began to see that I was being blackmailed in a most original manner. If I did not pacify Maestro Marco with some fat banknotes "for the press," he had the power to spoil my performance without anyone realizing what he was doing.

As I mechanically prepared for the second act I thought: This thing that is happening to me has happened before to other American girls here. I've heard them tell about it. I always thought they were alibiing because they didn't have the voices to make good . . .

In the second act there were no disputable long high notes, so Maestro Marco showed his versatility by shifting his method of attack. He hurried the music here, he slowed it down there, always in the places that would inconvenience me most.

When I sang my passionate farewell to the tenor, that gentleman added his bit by seizing me around the waist in a fashion nicely calculated to wind me. I broke his hold as I had learned in Girl Scouts to break the stranglehold of a drowning man, delivered my passionate farewell as far away from him as I could get and flung myself off the stage. I was so angry that I did not trust myself to speak when Poli came into my dressing-room.

"It's going very well," he said. I stammered a few words about the maestro. He shrugged his shoulders. Oh! That! The maestro was only a little nervous, that was all.

"There's only one thing that will calm their nerves, and that they can't have from you," he told me. "You have promised me never to give money as the other Americans do. And if I ever learn that you have done such a thing, I shall not have anything more to do with you. I couldn't launch you on a serious career." He went to the door. "I'm going home now. You have come splendidly through the hardest part of the opera and I have confidence in your performance tomorrow night. *A rivedera!*"

The last two acts, which are much easier for the soprano, the third act being the tenor's big scene, went very smoothly. Maestro Marco felt that he had given me sufficient warning; and he had. Not that I intended to do anything about it. I was full of the energy and courage of my rage against him. I was sure I could fight him every inch of the way through his old opera, if necessary.

The next morning, the day of the performance, I had to go to the theater for a rehearsal of my scene with the baritone. At the close of this rehearsal Maestro Marco appeared and asked me, very suavely, if I would come into my dressing-room for a few moments' chat with him.

My heart sank, but I followed him in obediently. Here was the moment, I told myself, to follow Poli's advice and not be ingenuous.

He closed the door and said, "You know, you did very badly last night."

"I did not," I replied promptly. "Don't you think a man like Poli knows anything?"

"Ah," said Maestro Marco in a silken tone. "But Poli went home at the end of the second act."

I blinked at him as a suddenly captured mouse blinks at a cat. There in dreadful clearness was the whole situation. I who had wished to fight my own battles was left without the protector upon whom I had been unconsciously counting.

Marco proceeded to elucidate. I had sung the last two acts as if I were a different person from the Traviata of the first two acts, from the little girl who had pleased them all at the orchestra rehearsal. A pity that Poli had not been there to see the lamentable fact that I could not possibly do four acts one after another. It was the vocal resistance that mattered—the strength to sing through an evening without tiring.

I had never known what it was to be tired vocally. I turned upon him with the desperate question:

"Why are you talking like this? Don't you know that even if it were true, you have no business saying such things to me on the day of my début?"

"That's the first intimation I've had from you that a début is a serious matter. You seem to think that all one has to do to get a début is to come from Rome one day and sing in Milan the next. Do you realize how many people wait for years before they get a Milan appearance?"

I had become so hysterical with the accumulated nervous strain it was only by not speaking that I refrained from bursting into tears. He was swinging into the heart of his discourse. If one made a failure in Milan one had failed all over the world. Did I hope for any mercy from the critics? There was only one avenue of escape, which he had already tactfully proposed to me and which I had rudely spurned. *If I gave him the wherewithal to placate the press*, the major tragedies of my début might be avoided.

I forgot my tears and rose. "I know what I do and I have faith in what I do, and not all the critics in Milan could shake my faith. Now will you let me go home and rest?"

He let me go. With a sneering: "*Brava, brava, Signorina!* You are incredibly courageous. Go home and rest—if you can!"

Half sick with nervousness, I was trying to rest in my shabby little hotel room late that afternoon when there came a knock at the door. In answer to my feeble "*Avanti!*" the door opened a crack and the unkempt head of a man enlarged the crack.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" I demanded.

"I am the Carcano messenger and I have brought you a registered letter. Will you please read it and sign this receipt?"

Dazedly I took the envelop that he carried, broke the seal and unfolded an official-looking document upon which were inscribed the following words:

The Impresa Lirica Sociale regrets to inform you that the Maestro Marco has protested you for the part of La Traviata.

I read the words over and over again. At first they meant nothing; then they rose up and stung me as if each letter had been the barbed tongue of a serpent. With a supreme effort I was able to control myself and say:

"That means—that I don't sing tonight?"

He nodded. He looked dreadfully sorry for me. He knew that such a note as I had received could often ruin a singer's entire career.

"Tomorrow," he faltered, "the impresario wants you to come to the theater to arrange about singing some of the rest of the 'Traviata' performances."

"Do you think I would sing after this?"

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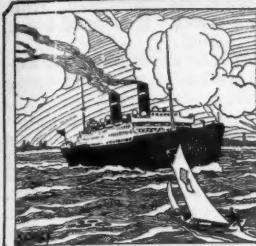
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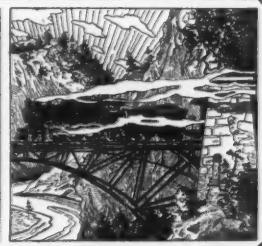
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Very near the breaking-point, but not yet over. One thing more. "Does Signor Poli know?" "I believe he has not yet been informed."

The storm broke as soon as he was on the other side of the door. I shall have to confess I wept as I never could again. I was heart-broken and despairing; the more so as I had been completely unprepared for such a crushing blow. I had not even bothered to read that clause which exists in every Italian operatic contract to the effect that if the maestro finds a singer unsatisfactory he has the power of "protesting" her; that is, in vulgar parlance, of throwing her out of the cast, no matter what the impresario who has engaged her may say. In all my defiance of Maestro Marco I had been ignorant of the deadly weapon he could use.

In that heart-breaking moment it would not even have interested me could I have known what was to happen to Maestro Marco when Poli found out what he had done.

All I could think of was the disgrace. What a beginning for a career! How could I ever hold up my head again?

For I would let it be known what had happened. I would not hush it up and give some alibi as reason why I had not sung.

Suddenly an idea came to me—an idea so sharp and painful that it acted as a stimulating tonic and helped me to regain control over myself. I had wanted to hide, to vanish off the face of the earth and never be seen again. That being mentally and physically impossible, I would do exactly the opposite.

I would dress myself in my very best and go to the performance of "Traviata," let myself be seen by all and sundry, tell the truth to inquirers and blandly applaud Maestro Marco's substitute Traviata whoever she might be.

The first battle of Milan had been fought, and I was not the victor; but I was far from being vanquished.

The Widow

(Continued from page 35)

thought by thought, move by move, was foreordained in immemorial law, so also was the thought and deed of that little Hindu village lying over beyond in the sun-gilt dust. Landlords, cultivators of the soil, artisans and outcast slaves, its sluggish human stream ebbed down the centuries an echo eternally fainter, eternally dying, eternally one.

Yet, not eight miles removed, big modern Calcutta, largest city of India, stewed on the fires of political unrest. For this was the autumn of 1921. In the very streets of the capital secret plotters and killers vied with open assassins to terrorize all who opposed the will of the new-made saint, Gandhi, then at the zenith of his power. And though the saint himself continued to preach "non-violence," his speech, day by day, was the speech that breeds hatred and destruction and drives to the spilling of blood.

Yet, save where young city-bred politicals had run abroad swinging the torch, great India in her half-million hamlets slept the sleep of the ages, aloof and unconcerned.

Unconcerned lay Sita's village, when, this sunup, two young strangers appeared in haste, demanding audience. The people, wondering, led them before the head man, to recite their tale.

"What is this ye babble?" the head man scoffed through his long gray beard, having heard them through. "Will ye feed my people thistles? The British came with the scales in their hand, and sat down with the sword, say ye? And therefore folk like us 'must' rise against them and destroy all the cloth that their ships have brought us and drive them out!" Go back speedily to the knaves that sent ye and tell them this:

"It is true that the sahibs came to trade and remained to rule. But whose is the advantage? Think ye we here be so thick of skull that we tire of peace and justice and desire you, robbers, set to rule us in the sahibs' place?"

"And now begone in haste, lest my chokidars break your heads."

So the young men left, but with wrath in their hearts, having failed in their errand.

And it chanced as they pushed across the fields, seeking the highroad, that they came upon a solitary hut, and a woman in a white sari issuing from the door of the hut.

"Who art thou?" called the strangers.

"I am Sita the widow," a frightened voice returned.

"Whither goest thou?"

"Even to the market, to buy food."

"And what is this thou wearkest, thou thing of foul omen!" cried one of the strangers, laying hold upon her garment, "A Manchester-made sari, by the gods!"

"What is Manchester?" asked the widow.

"It is my sari, the only one I have."

"You must give it up, none the less, and let us burn it. Off with it! Quick!" And he wrenched at the cloth.

But Sita clutched it tight about her, covering her face. "Who says I must take it off?" she panted.

"Mahatma Gandhi."

"Who is Mahatma Gandhi?"

"He who can curse. And if you do not instantly give us your sari, cursed you shall be—"

Sita stood dazed. According to the law of widows, she wore but one garment. To remove it were to strip herself naked before these men.

"You will not? Then on your head be it!" cried the stranger. "Cursed you are, in the name of Mahatma Gandhi whose disciples we be. Cursed you are, with the curse of leprosy. It begins on your forehead, moving slowly, slowly, down your spine, eating, eating all your flesh away in sores. See! See! The marks are there, on your finger-tips, now!"

With a shriek Sita turned and fled into the hut, tore off her sari and threw it from the door into the strangers' hands.

"Take back the curse! Take back the curse!" she screamed. But they, laughing, sped on their way.

Three days passed.

"Where is Sita the widow?" asked the market folk. "She comes not for food."

"Where is my mother?" asked Sarat's wife.

And Sarat, the kindly, answered, "For thy peace I will go to the hut and see."

But the door of the hut was shut. "O Mother-in-law, art thou within?" called Sarat.

No reply.

"O Mother-in-law, art thou ill?"

No reply.

"O Mother-in-law, thou art surely ill?" And Sarat opened the door.

In the far corner, crouched on the floor, a skeleton figure, naked, quaking, staring with great burning eyes at its outstretched finger-tips. The fever-cracked lips formed words—but to what sense?

"O Great Ones! O Great Ones! Not clean! Not clean!"

"What meaneth this?" cried the man.

"The two young men, disciples of one Gandhi—a saint—who sent them to take my sari—to burn my sari in fire—and because I would have kept it they cursed me in the name of their saint—cursed with a filthy curse that consumeth all the body in sores. It beginneth at the finger-tips—here—O Son-in-law, look! Canst see the marks? Are the Great Ones dead?" And the dry voice struggled in a gasp.

But Sarat, averting his eyes, tore off his scarf and threw it toward her. "Cover thyself, O Mother-in-law. I go to fetch thy daughter to comfort thee." He closed the door and ran.

When he returned, an hour later, with women and clothing and food, that door turned slowly on its hinges because against it, swinging with the empty food-jar from the peg, hung a small limp body—Sita dead—choked with the noose of the scarf.

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Truth

(Continued from page 85)

records. They were soon to show themselves worthy descendants.

On the extreme left of the line just south of Château-Thierry stretched along the southern banks of the Marne is the Third Division. It is made up of Regulars. Shortly they will add one more name to the glorious list on their colors and prove once more that regardless of losses, and of being almost isolated because surrounded on three sides by an attacking enemy, the Regular, imbued by the spirit of West Point expressed in its motto "Honor, Duty, Country," will not let an enemy pass.

Near by is the 28th Division made up of National Guard troops from Pennsylvania whose heritage stretches from the days of Washington's battlefields up through every war fought by the Union.

The French have brought all the artillery which can be spared from their whole front and concentrated it back of these two armies. They have brought all their infantry reserves.

Are they right? Or have they made a mistake, and will the German attack come somewhere else and crash with ease through the thinned-out defenses?

What is happening on the other side of the line, the unusual quietness of which for weeks has excited suspicion?

Many had believed that the attack would come the night of the thirteenth-fourteenth of July, the night before the great French holiday corresponding to our Fourth of July. With breathless anxiety the troops stood to their arms and waited, but nothing happened.

With sunset of the fourteenth began another period of anxiety.

About nine o'clock, when it was completely dark, Lieutenant Belastier, with Sergeant Lejeune, Corporals Hoquet and Gourmelon and Private Ausmasson, all of the Fourth French Army, without artillery support fire, with great courage and skill managed to slip through the older troops in the front-line German trenches. Finally, when well within the German line, they saw infantry approaching and by their bearing judged them to be younger men and storm troops. With heroic courage they attacked them by surprise, made several prisoners and succeeded in fighting their way back to their own lines, bringing their prisoners with them.

Questioning proved these men to be members of storm troops; it was also learned that the artillery preparation for the attack was to begin at midnight and the infantry to go over the top at daylight.

If this were true, the country opposite for miles back was swarming with the advancing hordes of German infantry moving to the positions from which they would make the assault in the morning.

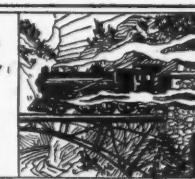
If it were not true, and the command was given to fire, the tremendous artillery conflagration which would blaze forth would notify the Germans as clearly as a message printed in the blackest and largest type on the whitest sheet of paper that the French expected the attack along this front, and as a consequence other fronts now being held feebly could offer but little resistance.

General Gouraud, prior to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, had spent twenty years of his life fighting in Nigeria, in the French Sudan and in Morocco. In these combats he had been twice wounded by arrows. Early in the Great War he had been wounded in the shoulder by a rifle bullet, but had refused to leave the line.

In the Dardanelles, a shell blew off one arm, broke one leg and so badly smashed the other that even today he walks with difficulty.

Without hesitancy and without undue delay, he gave the command for the heavier long-range guns and half the lighter guns to fire at eleven-thirty P.M. The other half of the light guns were kept as a daylight surprise for the



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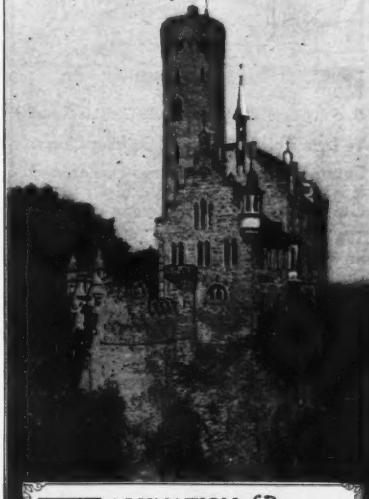
ENGLAND in May

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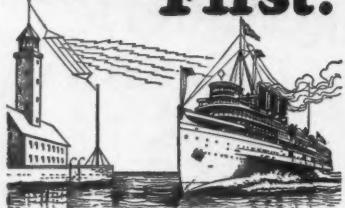


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German infantry when it left its trenches to attack.

With a crash that was heard miles away in Paris, with a fiery flare that illuminated the night, so that crowds poured from their houses to the streets of that same city to watch it, thousands of guns opened fire on the twenty-five miles of the Fourth French Army front. Thirty minutes later, at midnight, the Fifth French Army, on the left, opened the same fire.

Minute after minute passed and not a shot from the Germans. Ten minutes passed, fifteen minutes, twenty, twenty-five—and still silence.

Some of the watching and waiting officers almost cried in their increasing fear that a tremendous mistake had been made.

General Gouraud, watch in hand, stood silently waiting to see if the German fire would begin at midnight as the Germans captured in the raid had said. The minutes dragged along. The clock in the room struck twelve. No fire! Minute after minute dragged by.

At twelve-ten came the roar of several large-sized projectiles followed quickly by the terrific crashes of their explosions. The electric lights went out. The electric power-plant had been destroyed.

In the darkness the Chief of Staff heard General Gouraud say: "Thank God."

At the same time the anxious watchers in the trenches suddenly saw the sky behind the German lines light with a tremendous glare, stretching far to the right and left. In the fraction of a second which it took the sound to travel came the roar of 2,000 German batteries. This, an average of one gun for every twenty yards of the whole forty miles of front, was the greatest artillery concentration in history. The shells bursting on the whole front and reaching back for miles, not only covered the battlefield proper but fell even in the town of Châlons fifteen miles to the rear.

This fire continued without abatement until noon the next day.

It searched every locality, every spot which four years of fighting in the Champagne had taught them could be useful to troops and guns in battle; every locality which desperate troops might occupy in attempting to stay a victorious adversary.

From Reims to Château-Thierry the German artillery was preparing the way for twenty-five German divisions to smash through to both sides of Épernay ten miles away on the Marne and twenty-five miles to the west of Châlons.

With both German armies on the Marne and to the south of it west of Épernay, the center of the Allied line would be broken. The Allied troops to the West could only retreat towards Paris and the sea.

If the troops to the east of the German breakthrough retreated toward the east they would soon be back to back with the French and American troops along the line from Verdun to Switzerland. This would mean danger of being surrounded and captured.

If they retreated south to avoid this, they would have to abandon the line across the Argonne, later to be the jump-off for the greatest battle in our history; Verdun, so heroically and determinedly defended by the French in 1916, at the cost of 350,000 casualties; the San Mihiel Salient, where the great "First American Army" was to gain its first victory; and most of the Lorraine line held by the French since 1914, the scene of the first experience at the front of most of our divisions. In other words, such a break-through meant the beginning of the end, if not the end for the Allies.

As dawn approached, the anxiety of the soldiers of both the attacker and the defender increased. The desire for action became almost unbearable.

At four-seventeen A.M. the French and American infantry and artillery sentinels across the Champagne saw red rockets go up from the front line. The front line had no defenders in it, only heroic men who had

volunteered to be left alone scattered along its front. Those who survived the German bombardment before the attack were to send up a red rocket when they saw the German infantry come over the top and advance over no man's land. Having done this, they were free to run back through the bombardment to the nearest defenders in the sacrifice islands almost a mile to the rear. As the small detachment occupying these isolated posts were to be sacrificed, to reach one was only jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.

As the red rockets soared above the smoke and dust of the bombardment the infantrymen and artillermen of the light field-guns rushed to take their battle stations. The light field-guns, saved to welcome the German infantry as they came over the top, added their voices and flame to the artillery bombardment. Their shells covered no man's land, they kept pace with the German infantry's advance across the empty French first-line trenches, across the mile of ground networked with trenches all empty of defenders, with its dugouts filled with gas and bombs to destroy those who sought shelter within them.

From prisoners afterwards it was learned that the Germans asked each other, "What do these trenches empty of defenders mean?"

To them it was a relief from their surprise and uncertainty finally to bump up against the defenders of the "sacrifice islands." They thought these were the main infantry defense.

They were not, however, as they were bitterly to learn after they had overcome them through savage attacks and moved on, confident that no serious defense was left before them. Then, after passing over more empty trenches, they ran into determined defense by French and American soldiers a mile and a half to two miles back from the first French trench they had jumped into that morning.

Along with the machine-gun fire from the parts of the line held by Americans, they met accurate long-distance rifle fire. The American Army not only has preserved the traditions of its frontier forefathers but has insisted upon the careful training of the infantry soldier to use his rifle as his primary weapon.

However, despite all the German infantry had been through, they made a heavy attack upon the main position. On the front of the Ohio infantry and their French comrades on either side, they attacked seven times before noon.

The acts of heroism which took place would fill several volumes.

After the watchers left in the front-line trench to send up rockets warning of the German infantry attack, the garrisons of the sacrifice islands deserve the greatest credit for heroism.

These islands were simply various strong points in the midst of the trenches, approximately half-way between the old front line and the new front line which was the first line for this battle. They were islands because each was cut off from the others and must stand or fall alone. When the attacking German infantry struck them, it surged around them, and, in most cases, over them.

To break up the German infantry attack, even though submerged by it, thus preventing its striking the main line of defense a united and, perhaps, overwhelming blow, was the purpose for which these brave men were put in these positions. They knew they were to sacrifice themselves and had volunteered to do so.

Lieutenant Vaughn, with twenty-five men of the 166th Ohio Infantry, occupied one of these positions. None of them was seen again until the return of prisoners after the Armistice, then a few came back to tell of Vaughn, shot through the head, unconscious; the majority of his men killed or wounded by the Germans who surrounded them on every side. The survivors were made prisoners.

Major Basnier, of the 366th French Infantry, in one of these positions, with part of his battalion, held out for eighteen hours. When notified by wireless that his surrender was authorized, during the night with the remnants

of his men fourteen

Sergeants commonly though upon return had been hand-to-trench.

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Captain finding so destroyed al boring com together th making al them amo Mezy. Th that he wa tacks and the thirty- in the ba bridge below were killed

of his men, he forced his way back, bringing fourteen German prisoners with him.

Sergeant O'Neill, of the 165th Infantry, commonly known as the "New York Irish," though wounded by a shell fragment, insisted upon returning to his platoon after his wounds had been dressed and threw himself into the hand-to-hand fighting then going on.

Private Christenberry, of the 167th Alabama Infantry, though wounded, not only remained at his post but rescued a comrade who had been buried when a shell caved in the trench.

Lieutenant Williams, of the Medical Detachment of the Iowa Infantry Regiment, learning that men were constantly being wounded by the heavy German artillery fire upon those companies of the regiments which had no trenches, left the dugout where his first-aid station was established, and for more than two hours under heavy shell fire dressed the wounds of the men lying in the open.

Private Cummings, of the 149th Field Artillery, who was in a forward artillery observation station in an exposed trench, left it to go to the help of Private Sutton, of the same regiment, a telephone linesman badly wounded while repairing a wire. As he reached Sutton who was lying in the open he fell by his side also wounded. His captain, Reddington, who was controlling the fire of his battery from this station, immediately went to their rescue.

The Rainbow Division Trench Mortar Battery, made up of men from Baltimore, had been put in front of the main-line trenches, so that their projectiles might reach farther into the advancing Germans. Despite heavy losses, they remained until all their mortars had been destroyed or buried by the enemy's fire.

By noon, the attacks had practically ceased. They were renewed that afternoon, only to fail again. The next morning the assault was tried once more, and failed.

On the left, where stood the Third Division, was the beautiful hilly country with its poppy-strewn fields, through which winds the Marne.

The troops only had hastily dug shallow trenches of little value. Consequently, the German fire from shortly after midnight on, killed and wounded many more proportionately than was the case in the Champagne.

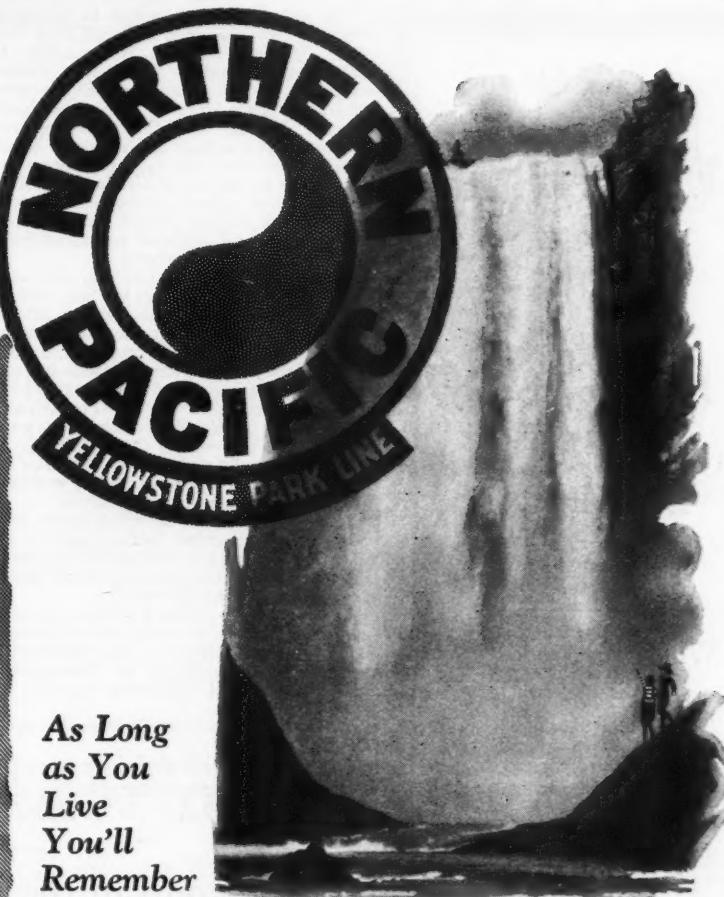
Here, as was the case in the Champagne, the Allied fire, brought down on the points where the German infantry was thought to be advancing, had a murderous effect.

It was learned afterwards that in the Champagne this fire had been so effective that two divisions had to be replaced by others, before the assault began. Germans have stated that they never saw so many dead during the war as their own infantry left where they advanced down the northern slopes of the valley of the Marne.

The first Germans got across the river in single pontoons at a number of places during the night. A smoke screen put down by the German artillery, just south of the river, covered the building of a number of pontoon bridges, across which the rest of their infantry came to the attack. Savage infantry fighting took place in the fields just south of the Marne and along the slopes leading up from it.

As was the case with the 42nd Division in the Champagne, the Americans of the Third Division took a heavy toll among the Germans with their rifles. German accounts published since tell of the severity of this fire.

Captain Wooldridge, of the 38th Infantry, finding some of his platoons virtually destroyed along with some of those of a neighboring company of the 30th Infantry, gathered together the remnants of the two companies, making about 200 men. He established them among the rock piles near the village of Mezy. They used their rifles so effectively that he was able to make three counter-attacks and capture nearly 300 prisoners. Of the thirty-two officers and 930 men present in the battalions to which Captain Wooldridge belonged, twelve officers and 461 men were killed and wounded during the morning.



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The 38th Infantry, to which he belonged, occupied a position open to attack from two sides. After several hours, it was being attacked on three sides. However, it yielded no ground, thereby earning for itself the name "The Rock of the Marne." In his final report General Pershing said that this regiment "wrote one of the most brilliant pages in the annals of military history, in preventing the crossing (of the Marne) at certain points of its front, while on either side the Germans who had gained a footing, pressed forward." Its loss in killed and wounded was about forty percent of its combat strength.

The 28th Pennsylvania Division, with some units in reserve and some in the line, took its share of the blow of the German attack. Though it had had no previous combat experience in quiet sectors to prepare it, its men and officers by their conduct in the face of one of the greatest assaults of history upheld the traditions established by the Pennsylvania troops on the battlefields of our previous wars.

Lieutenant McGuire, of the 109th Infantry, although painfully wounded, shortly after his platoon began an attack, refused to be evacuated and continued with his platoon.

Lieutenant Shenkel, with but seven men, completely surrounded by the enemy, led them in fighting their way out by the use of their rifle butts and bayonets, himself killing an opposing German officer.

Sergeant Martz gathered together the remnants of his company overrun by the German infantry attack. When all but three others were killed or wounded, he led them as they successfully fought their way through the enemy's lines.

To the east of the Third Division, during the

The tide had definitely turned. Soon Hindenburg was on the defensive, savagely attacked by American forces. Next month General Reilly will describe the Allied coup by which this was accomplished

A Second to the Motion (Continued from page 41)

precepts and in the light of the olden examples, the ancient ratios, the true percentages, the proper precedents. Nobody else can, either.

With shame I admit that, so far as my researches go to prove a case, the first irreligious attacks against the sacred principles of poker were made in my own neck of the woods, or, in any event, hard by. I'm told that it was a Kentuckian—he must have been temporarily besotted—who invented the "little dog" (i.e., a deuce to a seven without a pair) and the "big dog" (a nine-spot to an ace without a pair) and, with neither rhyme nor reason, ordained that a little dog should beat a straight and that a big dog should beat a little dog, but not a flush.

Inevitably there followed on the heels of these minor initial blasphemies the "little tiger" or "eighty-trey" and the "big tiger" or "eighty-king," thus making a total of four complete hands in addition to those which the founders, in their inspired wisdom, deemed sufficient for all purposes. The mania having been thus started, spread and multiplied itself until in circles which should have known better such giddy degeneracies as "blazes," "skips" and "straights-around-the-corner" likewise found vogue, so that in defiance of the intents of honest poker, almost any five cards a fellow picked up possessed potential value either as a short hand to draw to or as a finished hand to stand pat on.

The basic idea behind these novelties was to make the game more steamy, to give it speed and vitality in those dull periods which almost invariably befall during the dealing of jacks-pots when strong pairs fail to mate up and bobbies are curiously scarce. It was a bad idea. It was a criminal idea. It was inspired of Satan and born in iniquity.

In that Down South land of tried and earnest devotees, the height of the madness soon passed, so that with the exceptions of the two

sixteenth and seventeenth, the enemy continued to press forward between the Marne and Reims. On a front of thirty miles he penetrated from three to five miles.

Before noon of the eighteenth came the news that French and American troops had begun with great success an attack on the German right flank and rear from Château-Thierry in the south to a position opposite Soissons twenty-five miles to the north.

The defensive half of the second Battle of the Marne was over. For the first time a full-fledged Hindenburg-Ludendorff attack had been stopped dead.

The Germans attacked with about 650,000 men, approximately the same number used by them in their first great attack in March.

At the time of the March attack there were 285,000 American troops in France. There were but five combat divisions in the line or in reserve. This was a total of but 140,000 men to reinforce our Allies.

At the time of the German attack on July fifteenth there were fifteen American combat divisions in the line or in reserve. These with the Army Corps troops making a reinforcement to our Allies of 450,000 combat soldiers.

Those who did not serve in the battle itself served veteran French divisions from other parts of the line to do so.

This American reinforcement equal to two-thirds of the strength of the German assaulting force—only available, because of our unpreparedness, a year and a quarter after we declared war—came to our Allies at the decisive moment when victory, hitherto inclined to the German side, needed a strong counterbalance to tip the scales the other way.

The tide had definitely turned. Soon Hindenburg was on the defensive, savagely attacked by American forces. Next month General Reilly will describe the Allied coup by which this was accomplished

dogs and the two tigers, the other false hands fell into the disuse which they so amply merited. Still, the seeds of disorder and disorganization had been sown. Somebody—without knowing, I'll bet it was a woman or a foreigner—some such alien, I say, having not the fear of the hereafter before his or her eyes, conceived the horrible formula of making wild cards of the four humble deuces, thereby giving them vast strength in lieu of their inherent weakness, thereby weakening the very fabric of the game, thereby striking a death-blow at the heart of poker, which is the bluff.

Before that, having appraised a rival's chances, first by his behavior before the draw, secondly by his draw, thirdly by his conduct after the draw, and then having measured and weighed up his probable prospects as against yours, you might adventure a stoutish bet with some hope of scaring off a stiffer hand than your own and raking in the nourishing usufruct, meantime maintaining the air of inscrutable gravity which poetic souls in admiration have called the "poker face."

Therein lay the real triumph of pokerdom, the crowning achievement, the romantic feat which, being accomplished, stamped poker as the chief and the chieftainess and the entire royal family of all card games whatsoever. But what guidance for conduct might the most adept and confident master pattern by if some congenital idiot, having drawn a ten, a jack and a queen of spades to his brace of deuces, could call the ensuing malformation a royal flush and beat your legitimate set of fours or your natural ace-full on kings?

As for one trying to put a bluff over on somebody else under such circumstances—well, Ajax defying the lightning or even young Teddy Roosevelt running for governor against Al Smith was a model of conservatism when compared to such a one. You'd taken the soul and the vitals right out of the game; you'd

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turned it into an obscene and costly formula for matching morally monstrous and mathematically impossible hands against equally immoral and equally unmathematically balanced hands, with the consequent elimination of all the nice estimates, all the crafty plottings, all the delectable dissimulations, all the beautiful dramatics which once upon a time in a happier, saner day made of poker an art and a science and a gorgeous, glorious, glamorous thing.

Permit me, in illustration of the point I would press, to cite a recent experience: The other night I was invited to the home of a distinguished gentleman here in New York to play poker. So I whetted an extra-keen edge on my private snickersnee and dropped around.

What happened? I'm going to tell you, in part at least. After the stacks had been apportioned, the host stated that, if agreeable, we would play dealers' choice, as offering the spice of variety to the session. A majority of the eight present concurred in the suggestion.

Immediately the first man to deal stated that it would be draw—open on anything at all or on nothing at all—but that at the finish the lowest hand would win instead of the highest. This inwardly was distressing to me, as reversing the proper proportions but not so very vicious a departure from the ritual because it still would permit in a degree of the exercise of strategy and finesse.

Not to be outdone, the next man, with a prideful air—yes sir, actually prideful—announced we would now play a hand of high-and-low poker, or in other words, on the showdown the man holding the highest hand would divide the pot with the man holding the lowest hand.

Then we had a nice, murderous, bloody and, for all but one of those concerned, highly expensive set-to with the deuces roving loose and free. I was disappointed in the friend who made this election. Until then I had held him in high regard—had thought he might amount to something of real consequence in the world. But now I knew this latter-day passion for jazzing up our pastimes to the pitch of maniacal insanity had claimed him for its own. He was afflicted with *dementia pokox*.

After which number four proclaimed that the joker would now be inserted in the deck as a fifth wild card. Fired by this atrocity, the next man commanded that not only the deuces and the joker should be wild but also the two blond queens and the two one-eyed jacks, a grand total of nine irresponsible cards dashing to and fro and working havoc, and no reliance to be put on any of the old established combinations.

Actually the pink ladies were welcomed and especially were they welcomed by the individual who wound up holding two of them, besides a two-spot and the joker. But I was thinking to myself that here was a real menace to organized society.

And somebody else made it "Spit-in-the-Ocean" and somebody else made it "Ma Ferguson," and in poker you can't fall any lower than that because when you get down to that point you're already lower than a snake's stomach in a wagon track.

Believe it or not, I was the only man of the eight who dealt plain, old-time stud, and whenever my turn to deal came around I could sense a feeling of disappointment among the rest of those who were there. They blamed me for slowing up their sportive massacres.

Their reasons had been so perverted by frequent indulgences in the bad habits which have swept the poker-world along the Eastern seaboard that they found it dull to play by the ancient, century-tested rite with properly valued cards. They wanted brutally and blindly to match one pasteboarded phase of delirium against another phase of pasteboarded delirium through the long Walpurgis night while the shades of their revered ancestors shrieked in helpless agony over the profanation of shore-nuff poker.

What would any of the Old Masters, those men whose fame is a part of the poker folklore of our country—what would they have thought of such an orgy as that? Could you



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bring them back to life, what would they say about it? And how, in a magazine having a home and fireside circulation, would you ever go about even hinting at what they said?

I try to conjure up a picture of that acquaintance of my boyhood, old Colonel Doolove, of Alabama, as he would look and act and speak were it possible to fetch him out from Valhalla and show him the debasements of these present times. What a man he was, and what a poker sharp! Lovingly they still will tell you of the day when he conspired with a helper in a Birmingham gambling-house to slip him, at the psychological moment, a stacked pack for the despoilment of certain visiting sportsmen.

But the accomplice, who owed him a grudge, played a low-down trick on my venerable friend. With mucilage he carefully glued all the cards of the special deck into a tight mass; then, beforehand, he tipped off the prospective victims. So when the colonel effected the switch, the others were waiting for what would follow.

Colonel Doolove pitched his ante into the center. He thumbed the top card. Strangely it resisted him. He thumbed again more vigorously. He shook the pack to loosen it up. Then he rapped its edges, top, bottom and sides, upon the table, coughing to hide a natural embarrassment. Then he put it down.

"Gentlemen," he said, "man and boy, for going on fifty years, I've been running cold decks over on suckers. In my time, I've handled probably a thousand cold decks. But, gentlemen, as Heaven is my judge, this is the first one that ever froze solid on me!"

What would Ike English, of Louisville, have said about the 1928 brands of fashionable poker—Ike English who was the smartest poker technician I ever knew? Anyhow, he is credited with having effected what I maintain was the smartest poker coup in history.

Here's how it went: In Cincinnati one night he broke into a strange game. Straight draw was the medium and the blue empyrean the limit, which suited him. The game wagged along awhile and nothing unusual happened. Then Ike, sitting next to the dealer, skinned his hand and found he had four kings and an ace.

He opened with a good-sized bet, not a bet so large as would scare off the customers but just large enough. His immediate neighbor on the left, a party with a dyed mustache, saw Ike's bet and doubled it. The dealer reraised, and everybody else dropped out, leaving the issue to these three. Ike reraised, Mustaches reraised, shoving in half of a big stack. The dealer raised once more when his turn came, and Ike went right back at the pair of them. Mustaches lifted her a little nearer the starry blue dome.

By this time upwards of three thousand dollars' worth of chips—a tremendous pot for those times—was scattered upon the cloth. The dealer shook his head. "This is getting too rich for my blood," he murmured. "I guess I'll have to fold up my little trey-full on sevens and leave it to you two to fight it out by yourselves."

Ike, still buoyant, raised again and at this Mustaches called, with the remark: "That's enough, now that we've got the shorts crowded out." The dealer looked toward Ike.

"How many cards, if any?" he inquired. There was something peculiar and ominous, something covert and suspicious, something of the air of the cat that's about to eat the canary, in the way he looked as he said it. It took a genius though to discern the menace—to sense that, the need for concealment being past, a jubilant conspirator had for just one fleeting second let his guard down.

In the brief, the exceedingly brief, space of time between the asking of the question and the answer, Ike English, who was just such a genius, did some lightning-fast thinking.

To himself, he said:

"I'm on now—I'm being jobbed. These two—the dealer and Mustaches here alongside me—are in cahoots. They've worked the old whipsaw back and forth until my pile is nearly all in the middle and now Mustaches will clean

me with a straight flush, because it'll take a straight flush to beat me. But he won't hold it pat—it would look too suspicious if four kings and a straight flush were both dealt pat at the same time. He'll draw one card and make the hand that way."

"Yes, that's the wrinkle—he's already fumbling the card he's going to discard. He's letting me see him fumble it, which is the tip-off. Well, there's just one chance in the world to beat these bright boys. If I stand pat, as though I had a full, the card he draws will complete his four-card straight flush at one end. If I draw a card, he'll complete his bob-tail at the other end. There's just one chance and here's where I take it."

I claim that for nerve and instantaneous figuring, the thing has never been bested. Ike English looked at the dealer and, as he discarded his ace and two of his kings, he said:

"Gimme three cards."

The dealer's jaw dropped. Mustaches' jaw dropped; and Ike English knew he had guessed right. With grief and shock written all over him, Mustaches now took one card just as Ike had deduced that he would. It was Ike's bet. He looked at his hand. He hadn't bettered his remaining pair of kings but the first card he had drawn was the five-spot of hearts and the second card was the ten of hearts; the third didn't matter.

Of course, if the chance of the game had given Mustaches a stray heart of whatsoever denomination, or an off-suit card—either a five or a ten—to fill out his straight, Ike still was licked. Ike flipped out a single white chip.

"I didn't make it," muttered Mustaches sadly. "You win."

He tossed his hand down, backs upward, and Ike reached forth and seized on it and turned it over and exposed the faces. There they were—the six, the seven, the eight and the nine of hearts, which the crook had been nursing from the beginning, and the worthless jack of clubs which, thanks to Ike's sudden stratagem, he had drawn.

There was audacity for you, there was brilliance, there was true science. And they paid delectable dividends to the man who possessed these qualities. But translate the same conditions to contemporary settings and where would Ike English, with all his shrewdness and dash and gallantry, have been? He'd have been in the middle of a bad fix, that's where he'd have been.

Science counted in those days; now it's blind luck, blind ignorance, blind stubbornness, which brings home the mazuma. If you're going that far, why not go a step farther and play chess with the more outstanding features of ping-pong interpolated? Or bridge with ten or a dozen jokers added to the original fifty-two cards? Or professional baseball with three batters going and three separate batters up, all at once?

Me, I'm praying for a return to normalcy. While praying, I seek to comfort myself with various philosophic reflections: When things get so bad they can't get any worse, there's nearly always a turn for the better. It's darkest just before the dawn.

Anyhow, there are rifts in the encompassing gloom. Here and there in my wanderings back and forth across the continent and up and down it, I have found a green oasis in the desert. Out in California the boys—yes, and the girls—hold aloft the banner of poker true and undivided. In San Francisco I encountered two women—jeweled ornaments of the sex—who maintained that old-fashioned stud, which was good enough for their fathers, was good enough for them.

And down in Tidewater, Virginia, and also in Louisiana and Texas and likewise in Montana and Oregon and Arizona, have I encountered stalwart males who stood by their guns in the last ditch and with me chanted the slogan: "If the cards run against me, I may lose my pants, but I'll be durned if I'm going to lose my self-respect!"

Nor am I!

Is there a second to the motion?

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